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GERMAN LITERATURE

Education of a democrat

S. S. Prawer

THOMAS MANN
Diaries 1918-1939
Selected and Foreword by Hermann Kesten
Translated by Richard and Clara Winston
471pp. André Deutsch. £16.95.
023975156

For much of his long life, Thomas Mann would retire every evening to set down, briefly, his impressions of the day that had just passed. He would describe his meals and visits to the dentist as well as encounters with the famous and the obscure; he would recall what he had read and what he had written and meditate on social and political events. He found comfort in this activity, this attempt to capture each passing day; not because he wanted to record and remember, but rather because he wanted "to take stock, to review, to maintain awareness, to achieve perspective" (February 11, 1934). On at least two occasions, he burnt a large number of the notebooks he filled in this way; but he kept behind, with directions that they were not to be opened until twenty years after his death, sealed packages that contained all his diaries from March 1933 until 1955, as well as one that he had kept from 1918 to 1921.

The Fischer Verlag began publication of these writings in 1977, under the editorship of Peter de Mendelssohn (reviewed in the TLS, April 14, 1978 and October 10, 1980) and it is from the first four volumes of this edition that Hermann Kesten has made the selection now under review. He has done his task well. Realizing that he would have to leave out at least four times as much as he put in, he made the sensible decision never to cut an individual entry. English readers will therefore find far fewer mental snapshots than those who can consult the German originals; but each snapshot is complete, untruncated, and as untouched as competent translation will allow.

Though he called what he wrote in these diaries "my life's secrets" and would never permit anyone but himself to open them, Thomas Mann did, on at least one occasion, give his readers some insight into their nature and contents. This happened in *The Education of a Democrat*, which is full of carefully chosen quotations from journals kept during the composition of that novel—a novel that itself clearly

made use of earlier diaries, including those of 1918-1921 which Mann preserved when he burnt so many others in the garden incinerator behind his house in Pacific Palisades. The full fascination these daily jottings can exert has, however, only now become apparent. Their intermingling of the public and the private, of profound concern with world affairs and regard for the author's own comfort and the well-being of his family; their quick, telling impressions of hundreds of personages, high and low, who crossed Mann's path; their intelligent judgments on a large variety of books and authors; their honesty in recording emotions, impulses and actions even when these seemed less than admirable; their account of German and European politics in two important periods from the vantage-point of an intelligent, sensitive and concerned observer—all these features make for absorbing reading.

On the packages in which he had sealed his diaries Mann wrote that they were "of no literary value". But no one who reads them can fail to notice that they contain nothing else, nothing that is not tallingly and exactly formulated; and even if they are read in the abbreviated rather than the full version, they soon appear to cohere into a form which resembles that of the documentary novel. Indeed, by editing *The Education of a Democrat*, in which he revealed parts of his diaries to the public, "the novel of a novel", Mann himself appears to place them in a line that leads from Gide's *Journal des Faux-monnayeurs* to Günter Grass's *Frühling der Liebe* and to the *Diary of a Novelist*.

When the diaries resume in 1933—on March 15 of the year in which Hitler came to power—we find a Thomas Mann whose commitment to Weimar democracy was so deep that the new rulers could not but see in him an enemy to be persecuted. He was away from Germany at the time, on a visit to Switzerland; and the news he had from his home in Munich soon convinced him that it would be inadvisable to return in the immediate future. Although, as the diaries make crystal-clear, he never felt the slightest doubt about the evil and unprincipled nature of the Hitler régime, he refused at first to speak out publicly against the new order. He was anxious, above all, to ensure that the books into which so much of his life had gone, and would continue to go, were not denied a German readership. The diaries then show, with welcome clarity, how he gradually overcame his hesitations and vented his feelings into the political limelight as champion of a better Germany than that which had

defender of a Prussian discipline that he saw incarnated in the German state which fought the First World War, an advocate of a German *Kultur* whose spirituality and life-dedication seemed deeper and more valuable than rationalistic, word-obsessed Western "civilization", a believer in "menschgeschätzte Innerlichkeit", inwardness protected and defended by those whose business it was to run the state—we watch the gradual transformation of a man of this kind into a champion and supporter of a democratic republic. The fact that his progress in this direction is anything but smooth makes the record all the more fascinating. We see him cling to many of his old preconceptions, watch his horror of what he regarded as the "anarchy" of the *Republik* in Munich and his hatred of those who imposed the Treaty of Versailles on defeated Germany; at one point he is so ready to cry a plague on both houses that he sees even communism as preferable to a democracy whose spokesmen were Woodrow Wilson. None the less this portion of the diaries shows very clearly his inevitable progress towards what we know to lie beyond its closing date of 1931: reconciliation with his brother Heinrich, against whose views his *Meditations of an Unpolitical Man* had been largely directed; and the commitment to the Weimar constitution which he affirmed in his essay *On the German Republic* (1922).

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chosen, and continued to support, National Socialism. The decisive date is December 30, 1936—the day on which Mann revealed his abhorrence of what was being done in Germany's name in an open letter to the Dean of Bonn University who had signed the decree revoking the honorary doctorate bestowed on him in happier times. Mann had in fact become a Czech citizen shortly before; but despite this symbolic assumption of another nationality, Mann would henceforth see himself as a representative of a better and truer Germany in exile. The story the diaries have to tell ends, for the time being, with his migration from Switzerland to the United States just before the outbreak of the Second World War; but there are, of course, diaries from a later period that still await translation.

The process of *Bildung* chronicled in the section that extends from 1933 to 1939 is complicated by deep-rooted prejudices and long ingrained attitudes. The role that Jewish intellectuals had played in Munich's political life at the end of the First World War, when some of them stepped into the limelight by becoming officials of a short-lived revolutionary government, had horrified him, and although his wife came from a Jewish family he does confess, in the early 1930s, that he continued to have some sympathy with anti-Jewish resentments. After the clear break of 1936, however, this too changes; he welcomes many of his associations with Jewish refugees, and it is pleasing to report that it was a review by the editor of the present selection from his diary, Hermann Kesten, which induced him to write, on January 28, 1938: "Absolutely true: that German literature needs the Jew!" When he looked at what he described as the "useful petty-bourgeois scum" which had floated to the top in Germany, he reflected with bitter amusement that in the mouths of criminal types like Streicher, theories of racial superiority immediately related themselves to the emigrant status, coupled with doubts about Germany's territorial integrity if National Socialism led it into a war it was bound to lose, made the same Jews... to be one day scattered throughout the world and to view their existence with an intellectually proud self-irony. That this did not

make him into an uncritical philo-semite will be obvious to all readers of *Doctor Faustus*; it appears from the diaries too, where we find him fastidiously shrinking from the idea that he might be judged to have something in common with such fellow-exiles as Alfred Kerr or Kurt Tucholsky.

Even in the privacy of his secret jottings we find the exiled Thomas Mann constantly standing on his dignity. He was, of course, financially more secure than most other exiles, and his world fame ensured him a welcome denied to more marginal men. When one contrasts the life these journals reveal, the comfort and even luxury Mann and his family enjoyed in Switzerland and the United States, with the hand-to-mouth existence of Robert Musil, one can easily understand the latter's resentment at the apparent good fortune of a writer he judged to be inferior to himself. Installed in some Grand Hotel far beyond the means of most refugees, Mann complains to his diary: "I find everything in this cultural milieu shabby, rickety, uncomfortable, and beneath my accustomed standards"; and he continues to hemoan his "ghastly and dreary déclassé existence" until he has managed, with the help of wife, children, and hired servants, to re-create, first in Switzerland and then in the US, the precise ambience of his Munich study, including his desk with Egyptian figurines and other accustomed appearances.

Hermann Kesten includes in his selection several passages in which Mann's undoubted sense of humour and delightful irony desert him and he becomes merely pompous; but he spares us the distressing spectacle of the moral obtuseness into which his sense of his own goodness, and of the dignity of his calling, could lead Mann on occasion. When, for example, news filtered into Switzerland that Theodor Lessing, a writer of some reputation, had been brutally done to death in the early days of the new régime, he declares himself "horrified by an end of this kind, but because it is an end, but because it is so miserable and may be suitable for a man like Theodor Lessing" ("und eilem Lessing stehen mag", but not for me). The phrase I have italicized in this diary-entry of September 1, 1933, represents, in my view, a deplorable lapse of which the later

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Much of the "education" chronicled in these pages was gained through reading, comprising a number of books and authors, not only mentioned, but brightly and colorfully characterized: sometimes soberly and judiciously, as when the weaknesses of Stefan Zweig are brought into sharp focus, sometimes with wicked wit, as when Sir Rabindranath Tagore is seen as "a refined old English lady". Particularly interesting is the gradual change or doapening of literary impressions to be observed over several antries. This is more easily observed in the unabridged German versions, where we can see Mann take up a novel by Jakob Wassermann, for instance, and record differences of acoreordation day by day, as he reads

Mann is careful, however, to give writers who have chosen to remain in Germany the benefit of every doubt. Finding Hans Fallada apparently toying an inhumane Nazi line in the preface of a book which in other respects seemed decent enough, Mann writes: "Could this be simply some sort of German code language, that pretends to be the human viewpoint in order to make a secret plea for it? For even after a secret humane revolution it is still ultimately the task and natural calling of the writer to seek what is humane." Nothing could be better sum up the latter Thomas Mann's own beliefs and efforts than the last sentence in this extract from his novel *The Magic Mountain* (1934). Here he writes: "The world has sought his warrant by the sword, but a better Germany than that of Hitler to German traditions he found in a life."

The illumination the diaries provide is not confined to works actually being written or to the period concerned. There are vivid flashbacks to the time of *Toni Krüger* and *Der Schwarm*, whose homoerotic components are placed in perspective by Mann's frank revelations of his own sexual attitudes, impulses and activities. The diaries point forwards too; above all because of their constant concomitance with a problem which Mann's friend T. W. Adorno was later to encapsulate in the question: how can literature possibly survive after Auschwitz? In this sense the question presents itself in a somewhat different form: how can one make literature out of the villainy of the Nazi regime? As early as 1934 he thinks that one of the ways in which this might be done would be a novella on the theme of Faust and his devil's pact.

which Mania, persecuted by a regime in which Mania was anything but a victim, the gang of unprincipled adulterers and criminals, he never loses his belief in the essential greatness of Germany or his certainty that one day it would find its soul again. We constantly see him seek and find symbols, abbreviations which characterize the world the Nazis were creating; he has a splendid passage in which he makes a description of Goering's wedding celebrations serve his purpose, but such things only confirm him in his strong sense of his own mission. "I must trust," he writes, "that the characteristically fortunate quality of my life will see me through . . . The preservation of German intellectual life of my stamp will be possible once war is over. While the attitudes of Gottfried Benn, C. G. Jung and even my friend Gerhard Roth are

[illegible]

in a paper which has already become a classic less than eight years after the first delivered, T. J. Reed demonstrated some of the ways in which Thomas Mann's novels provide him to be a profound and permanent valuable historian of his time". The diaries strengthen that claim. No one can read them without gaining deeper insights into the period in which they were composed; and our readers will clamour for the publication of a companion volume containing selections from the later diaries. Those whose German is at all up to the mark will have their appetite whetted for the complete version in the original language which is still projected, of being brought out by the Fischer Verlag. They will not be disappointed.

There were 148 such concentration camps for German prisoners in Eastern and eighty-four in Asia (mostly Siberia). The camps were of the following kinds: those for officers, those for non-commissioned rank and file, and civilian. Internment camps. Circumstances varied immensely from camp to camp and from land to land, but one thing was common to all: the victim of war was an innocent everywhere — *Schuldlos* — *blameless*. He was "weak sickness," *schwach und krank*, in body and mind. The only possible antidote expressed itself in the need for distraction, for the illusion of imagined reality: the surest release was to join a party and to create an accumulation of interest and sympathy which is peculiar to a theater audience.

The work achieved in the theaters organized in German prison camps

The standard of repertoire was indeed extraordinarily high. These were in marked fashion. Ghost productions in no fewer than four different camps. The *Pillars of Society* in nine, while there were even two productions of *Peer Gynt*; *Macbeth* in Much Ado, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Hamlet* were the pick of the Shakespeare plays. A few modern pieces were performed for the first time in one or other of these prisons. And the standard of performance, greatly assisted by professional actors having been prisoners, appears to have been higher than might be based on expectations not a few successful actors on a contemporary German stage made start. We are told, in prisoner-of-war camps. The company that performed *Anna Karenina* at Knokkele, and the professional stage in Berlin in the following year.

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The work achieved in the theatres organized in German prison camps

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"He is a bore, normally. It is odd that his first work of fiction should have appeared until his mid-fifties." *Francis King, Spectator*

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"Coates is a magnificent stylist for whom each word matters. . . . There are no less than four comparisons with *Heart of Darkness*. . . . It is heartening so early in the year to encounter a work of fiction of such high quality."
Paul Selby, *Standard*

"It is hard to convey to the idly interested newspaper reader just what Coates's special quality is. His writing gives off whiffs of Conrad, of Nabokov, of Golding . . . but he is none of these. He is a harsh compelling new voice . . . which everyone would read if he spoke."
Victoria Glenindien, *Sunday Times*

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Hermione Lee, *Observer*

Secker &
Warburg

MILICIA GARDAM
1810-1870
*Pathfinder, Love
and other Stories*
Milicia G. Gardam's writings, the
first of which were published in 1840,
were a collection of adventures, love, and
other stories. He was a pioneer of the
Western world, and his work was
the first of its kind. He was a
pioneer of the Western world, and
his work was the first of its kind.
Buried in the same place as his wife

Let there be cuteness

Nick Roddick

ADRIAN BAILEY
Walt Disney's World of Fantasy
253pp. Limsfield: Dragon's World.
£12.95.
0 90895 60 6

FRANK THOMAS and OLLIE JOHNSTON

Disney Animation: The Illusion of Life
575pp. Abbeville/Orbis. £35.
0 89659 232 4

All Hollywood moguls had a marked tendency to see themselves as God. Harry Cohn at Columbia spied on his creation through hidden microphones, and MGM, with its slogan of "More stars than there are in the heavens" clearly aspired to something more than a mere copy of the firmament. But nowhere was the aspiration to divinity more evident than at Disney. In the early days, the creation of a self-contained universe was fairly simple, since Disney's world contained no human beings, only the creatures in its maker's imagination. After a false start with *Alice in Wonderland* cartoon in the 1920s, the small-town boy from Kansas assembled his first true Eden in 1928, peopled largely by mice. To them were added a buck-toothed hound in 1932 and a bad-tempered duck in 1934. In this cosy little Eden, governed by eggs, with little sign of serpents, Disney's efforts were devoted to capturing "the illusion of life," but by that the meant movement, not reality.

Five years later, he was ready to tackle real wickedness, not just those cheerful little surrogates, naughtiness and onerousness (a quintessential American characteristic), which were the domain of mice and duck. In it world ruled by benevolent magic, the evil Queen in *Snow White* and the Seven Dwarfs (1937) and the villainous Stromboli in *Pinocchio* (1940) nevertheless presented some kind of threat to the colourful paradise in which the Disney creatures gambolled. With *Fantasia* (1940), evil itself made an appearance. In retrospect, it was a significant moment. On its first release, *Fantasia* did bad business (though less, probably, because it personified evil than because it strayed far outside the world to which Disney's customers had grown accustomed). And shortly afterwards came the first real trouble in paradise: the studio strike of 1942.

The 1940s appear to have been a time when Disney began to look for new ideas. None of the minor animated features of the 1940s quite captured the commercial and critical success of *Snow White*, and the next two decades were spent designing different Edens, starting with the "True-Life Adventures" in which animals were anthropomorphized and humans were stripped of all their problems. Finally, coming rather late to the real business of making a world in his own image, Disney's intentions turned in his masterpiece, *Disneyland* - "the happiest place on earth", where dreams and nightmares are reduced to manageable proportions, history is homogenized and, if you drop your candy wrapper, it will be picked up in under two minutes.

Disney's control of his world extended to its history and almost nothing derogatory of any length ever gets published because the company insists on seeing all copy before it will release illustrations. In 1968, when Richard Schickel produced his generally affectionate but occasionally critical history, *The Disney Version*, he was forbidden to use so much as the famous signature on the dust jacket - let alone illustrations. And immediately after the book's publication, the Disney organization marshalled any number of its stars to tell interviewers just how Schickel had misrepresented a sweet, kind and - the ultimate crutch - recently deceased person. Since Schickel, no one has tried to do it again.

The two most recent books on Disney are well within the confines of the authorized version: indeed, Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston's *Disney Animation: The Illusion of Life* is the nearest the organization has yet come

to releasing its own Dead Sea Scrolls. Both books bear the Walt Disney copyright and both are, therefore, lavishly (over-lavishly) illustrated. But both represent something of a departure in their exegesis of the story. Adrian Bailey's *World of Fantasy* traces the career of, first the man, then the institution, from birth up to but not quite including EPCOT, that extraordinary encomium to a capitalist future recently launched in Florida. Bailey makes one thing quite clear: after his short days in Kansas City and the very beginnings on the West Coast, Walt Disney, like all good creators, did not actually do the work himself. In effect, he said "Let there be -", and an ever-growing army of storymen, animators, inkers and in-betweeners

opposite the studios, performing acts with glove puppets.

It would be a mistake, though, to be scornful of the fallacious that Disney strove to create in his place of work and propagated outside it. Disneyland is a masterpiece, though exactly what kind of masterpiece is difficult to define. Perhaps it is that peculiar twentieth-century art form, the packaged fantasy. But a packaged fantasy with a definite meaning. It is not hard to understand why, in the (for Disney) dark days of the 1960s, the Yippies stormed the park and erected the Viet Cong flag on Tom Sawyer's Island. Disneyland stands for silent middle America: family, flag and "being on the team". And that, as the Thomas/



Interpreting the image: a poster by Reginald Mowbray for the 1955 Ealing Studios comedy *The Lady Killers*, one of the examples included in *Projecting Britain: Ealing Studios Film Posters* (Gpp. BFI Publishing, £7.95, 0 85170 122 1). Edward Bowden, James Flinn, Barnett Freedman, John Milton, and John Piper were among the established painters to produce work for the studio.

made sure that there was. Disney himself, Schickel revealed, could not even draw Mickey or execute the famous signature (something which caused him frequent embarrassment with autograph hunters). But he was, at least according to the authorized version, the undoubted guiding spirit of the whole operation: the gannet, the storymaker - the man who generated the enthusiasm and the ideas.

What is interesting about Bailey's book is that it is the first studio-sponsored history to admit that there might have been flaws in the Disney firmament - before, of course, dismissing them with the same cavalier insouciance that denies the evilness of all Disney villains, from the Queen in *Snow White* to Shere Khan in *The Jungle Book*. In *Bambi*, Bailey admits, "the baby animals are overloaded with sentimentality; yet I judge their aim to be true: when as a child I first saw the film, I responded to the sentiment and the coyness of it all. Today, I am embarrassed by the sentiment but awed by the mastery of the presentation." Never mind the quality, feel the width.

The true stamp of the authorized version as updated, however, is to be found in Bailey's treatment of the 1942 strike which destroyed for ever the cosy working atmosphere of the old Hyperion Avenue studio as described in the Thomas/Johnston book ("When it came light down to it, most of us were more interested in keeping animation alive than we were in making money.") The strike was over unionization - a topic that was anathema to a man who was prepared to pay more money to a private company to supply Disney with electricity rather than use the Anaheim city power company. Bailey admits that there was a strike, but gives minimal details. Then, with no hint of a non sequitur, he launches into the following:

Walt Disney's dedication to his work, on the other hand, continued to be entirely selfless. He became known as "the hardest worker in Hollywood". His ceaseless drive took him to the studio at dawn... It is not generally known that each Christmas, Disney entertained children at the hospital

Johnston book makes clear, is what working at Disney meant: "It was like being a player on a winning team." When it comes down to it, we all have a half-admitted urge to be on the team. *Disney Animation: The Illusion of Life* is by far the fullest and most stunningly illustrated work yet to appear under the Disney imprint. It provides the first thorough description, by two of the "Nine Old Men" who shaped animation for twenty years, of what went on - of "how it was done". The book is so massive that it is difficult to hold, and so lavishly produced that the series of "flip-over" illustrations that decorate the top right-hand corner of each page won't work because the quality of the paper is too good. The material included is rich and fascinating: original sketches, storyboards, full and sometimes double-page colour illustrations from the Disney classics, detailed descriptions of processes and techniques, biographies of all the studio's top animators. Visually, it is unlikely to be equalled. But for a coffee-table book, the text is disappointingly skimpy. The book, studio sponsored and produced over a four-year period, Thomas and Johnston are determined to share their erudition but too often we follow them through painstaking descriptions of technical processes that leave us little wiser, and we are treated to a self-taught aesthetic in which notions such as character and character relationship are presented as though they were exciting discoveries made only at Disney.

Thomas and Johnston are so perfectly attuned to the Disney ethos that they tend to lose all sense of proportion, equating their excitement at the multi-plane camera with the exhilaration of the Wright Brothers. A caption to a still of *The Old Mill*, Disney's first Oscar-winning short, gives both its tone and the key to the Disney organization: "The Old Mill - the picture that proved beauty and visual effects could hold an audience for nearly ten minutes." Pinned above a new animator's desk is a card reminding him of his responsibilities: "the maxim 'Keep it cute!'." *Disney Animation: The Illusion of Life*, perhaps, the first and last - and least - entertaining children at the hospital

Bring on the cavalry

Kevin Brownlow

DAN FORD
The Unquiet Man: The Life of John Ford
324pp. William Kimber. £11.50.
0 7183 0059 9

John Ford is revered by *chivastes*. They regard him as an irascible but lovable Irishman, far too intelligent for Hollywood, who made the greatest pictures ever to come out of America. That's the accepted legend, and if anyone fostered legends, it was John Ford.

Dan Ford, his grandson, has interviewed his co-workers, and assembled his personal and professional papers, and in *The Unquiet Man* he makes a valiant effort to separate the myth from the man. Some of the light he casts on Ford is considerably less than flattering. Yet a curious thing happens. Far from destroying the myth he creates a picture of a man even more remarkable than the legends suggest:

He was a great film-maker, a consummate craftsman, but he also had a notion of himself as a man of action, a Byronic figure, that accounts for his lifelong fascination with the military. He served with great distinction in World War II and was eventually awarded an Admiral's star. After the war he became obsessed with the American military tradition, and in the minds of his liberal critics he became the American Kipling.

"Kipling" is as misleading an accolade as "Byronic" as Dan Ford is quick to point out, suggesting that the true American Kipling was James Warner Bellah, the author of Ford's famous cavalry trilogy. Ford was compared to Kipling because of his love for old-fashioned virtues, his admiration for the military, and, to be blunt, his jingoism.

The Unquiet Man reveals Ford to be a much more confused character, with the dithyrambic conservatism pitched against the social rebel. One image stands out - the old man, ignoring personal hygiene, his beard, hair and fingernails growing long, while rows of neatly pressed naval uniforms hang in his closet. But the seamy side of Ford's life was not exclusive to his old age. In the 1920s everyone defied prohibition, but there can't have been many who would build one room to house his books, another, with secret compartments, to hide his liquor. One illusion may be further shaken by revelations about Ford's treatment of actors, some of whom were his friends. He was one of the few directors who lacked theatrical training, and perhaps he felt insecure, confronted by skilled actors. Yet he had an intuitive and uncanny appreciation of acting. While he was unable to articulate it, he could goad actors into excelling themselves by a combination of sarcasm and outright bullying.

He behaved like a character out of one of his cavalry films - a bull-headed, bad-tempered Irish sergeant, who inspired loyalty and even love from his troops (though one wonders why as one reads story after story proving how impossible he was). Dan Ford includes in his book an extraordinary interview with Harry Carey Jr, the son of the man who helped start Ford's career, which reveals his methods with actors:

John Ford was a born psychologist. He could manipulate actors better than any other director I ever worked for. If you were doing a tender love scene, he was just marvellous to you; he treated you with loving care, and you wanted to kiss him after every shot. But if it was a scene that had violence in it, or anything to do with your coming apart emotionally, he was just the opposite. He'd start digging and picking on you, the moment you walked on the set.

From the evidence of this book, I suspect that one person who didn't like John Ford very much was Ford himself. He was certainly a hard man to pin down. Peter Bogdanovich made a film about him, for which he took the old man to Monument Valley. But

when he asked a question about how he did a certain shot in *Stagecoach*, Ford snarled "with a camera". Dan Ford made a very similar film, and also took the old man to Monument Valley. This time, Ford, working with his family, was on his best behaviour, told marvellous stories and was charming.

I was not so fortunate. I encountered him once at an Academy Function in Hollywood in the late 1960s. Tall and powerfully built, he stared at the world with a baleful expression in his one good eye (the other had an eyepatch). His expression suggested that of a alcoholic offered water. I tried to start him talking about his early pictures, but each question received a one "Don't remember". I felt as if I was challenging him with war crimes. I knew what would start him talking and introduced him to my wife, red-head and Irish. At once, he began rhapsodizing about County Waterford and the footbridge over the Blackwater.

But these pictures appealed through to the Emigre Irish - they corresponded to their romantic memories - or to the Irish at one remove, which was what Ford was. Born John Feeney Jr in Maine in 1895, he was the son of an immigrant saloon-keeper. His older brother, Francis, disappeared from home to turn up, years later, as a great motion picture actor and director. He had altered his name to one that Americans would respect; Ford, as in Henry. John took the same name and the same career, and followed his brother to Hollywood in 1914.

This period of Ford's career is virtually unknown, and little light is cast upon it here. The silent era's book's weakest section with names misspelled and events misrepresented. This is a great pity, for Ford regarded himself as "man of the silent cinema". He made over fifty silent pictures, and an Irish connection was apparent in many of them - *Hungry for Love*, *Slimyrock Handicap*, *Riley the Cop*.

One may wonder why Ford made so much fuss about his Irish origins. Hollywood was so heavily populated with people of Irish origin that you could make a crude generalization and say that if the Jews ran the business, the Irish ran the pictures. Being Irish, the Irish movies of those days were almost as glamorous as being Jewish in modern New York. John Ford did the unfashionable thing in boasting of his Irish roots. Dan Ford relates that his wife, Mary, took a dim view of his film-making, which she regarded as "low Irish" and demanded that he leave an activity which would place her above his Hollywood colleagues. The he says, is one reason why Ford became a Navy reservist.

Another is apparent throughout the book - that Ford remained a lonely, overgrown adolescent all his life. He loved joining things, but had a contempt for the establishment. Noticing common clubs excited him, and his cronies formed a Sham hall with a black man as President and the slogan "Jews not nodies". It was all excuse for Ford to drink and get away from Ford longed to live in Ireland. He had created about himself, and when he formed the Emerald Bay yacht club, he cruised around the Mexican coast, photographing Japanese fishing vessels and inventing a dangerous spy ring for the British Naval intelligence. But his legend came true. When war began, he formed an outfit called the "Photographic Unit, an excuse to have fun in uniform. It was taken over by the Navy, and then by the OSS, and Ford realized his greatest ambition - to experience the kind of adventure he had created for the screen. He was bombed and strafed at Midway, kept his camera running, and produced a bullet in his arm, and produced the *Battle of Midway*, which eventually won an Oscar. He was involved in the North African landings and the Invasion of Europe and he remained a civilian life with the rank of captain.

When you add to that the best of his films - *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Sons of Stagecoach* - you begin to realize the scale of his achievements. Dan Ford has written a fascinating book, and if some of the stories are apocryphal, it is nonetheless a valuable one. It serves as a valuable oral history by John Ford's family who, despite everything, still

Man, and other animals

Andrew Topsfield

Indian Drawings
Hayward Gallery

It was feared by some that last year's unprecedented glut of Indian exhibitions might bring an apathetic reaction once the Festival of India was over, and it is reassuring that the Arts Council have now organized this enjoyable show of Indian drawings of the Mughal period. The first of its kind to be held in this country, it has been selected by the artist Howard Hodgkin, himself a collector of Indian pictures. This is probably the best qualification for such a task, for although some museums have collected a fair number of Indian drawings - Hodgkin under-estimates their holdings in the introduction to his catalogue (Arts Council, £3.95, 0 7287 030 5) - as a distinct class of picture they have been appreciated more by the individual enthusiast. The only two serious studies of the subject hitherto were both written by scholar-collectors: A. K. Coomaraswamy's *Indian Drawings* (1910-12), the first book ever published on India's graphic arts, and S. C. Welch's more recent exhibition catalogue, *Indian drawings and painted sketches* (1976).

This apparent neglect results partly from the uncertainty of distinction between paintings and drawings in India. Both normally use the same technique: fine brushes, opaque water-colour and a paper support. Most Indian paintings rely for their expressiveness as much on taut, rhythmic clarity of outline drawing as on their controlled intensity of colouring, and in this sense could be called coloured drawings. What then is a drawing? For this exhibition it has been understood, on the whole, as anything less than a fully coloured painting. Four main types emerge, two of which are reasonable enough artists' working sketches and unfinished paintings in which only the preparatory under-drawing is complete. The other two, more ambiguous, types comprise highly finished grisaille works, sometimes lightly tinted, and otherwise finished paintings of certain schools, in which, for prevailing reasons of taste, large background areas were left untouched. Seen together here, these different types of work provide a wide and satisfying anthology of the linear experiments and achievements of Indian painters, although individually none of them has survived in great numbers. The two more finished types were always specialized genres, in most

cases preserved until recently in the princely collections for which they were made. Sketches and unfinished works, when preserved at all, were passed down within the artists' families. In the 1950s one Jaipur dealer could buy Rajasthani drawings by the bundle for their scrap paper value (about 1p per kilo). The same dealer would probably recognize several pictures now on show at the Hayward.

Hodgkin has used his artist's licence to include only pictures that move or please him, mostly from the Mughal and Rajasthani schools. There is little from the Punjab hill courts and almost nothing from the Deccan, the two distinctive linear idioms produced by the Mughal and Rajasthani schools. Certain classic types of drawing are omitted, such as the large scale Jaipur cartoons for wall-paintings and fine Kangra works such as the Boston *Nala-Damayanti* series. But neither is missed, for the exhibition is explicitly not an academic survey (both the



"The Emperor Akbar the Great hunting from a howdah on the back of an elephant", a seventeenth-century work of the Delhi school, from the exhibition reviewed here.

hanging and the catalogue follow no historical or regional sequence). It offers instead a varied and pleasantly idiosyncratic choice of drawings, ranging from the refined brushwork of the Mughal painter Bissawan to the superbly spare outline and detail of "Rana Amar Singh at worship" and the boldly conceived image of the hill prince Bhupal Dev and his lady gesturing towards their mirrored reflection. Hodgkin's favourite single theme is elephants. Eloquent Kotah elephant subjects punctuate the show, but the best of them, the late seventeenth-century elephant fight, seem conventional. More understated, but no less alive, are two fine Mughal elephant studies from the Fitzwilliam and Victoria and Albert collections. Assembled here, they suggest there is some truth in the idea that Indian artists have always depicted the elephant with greater sympathy than any other beast, including man.

At first, *The Tempest* seems a rather arbitrary, and even inappropriate, vehicle for a story about a disillusioned New York architect, Philip Dimitrios (John Cassavetes), "the king of high tech" as he sarcastically terms himself, who simply acts on that contemporary longing to get away from it all. Nothing here of Shakespeare drawing up the balance-sheet of his art (Phillip, we are led to understand, is a good architect who has lost interest in building casinos for the Mob), or of the self-consciousness that comes from the withering of age and a complimentary darity of vision. But in his updating of the text, Mazursky goes even further than turning it into a contemporary crisis-of-success fable, as in going further has come up with some show business that is not alien to Shakespeare. There are a number of unexpected, and delightful, song and dance routines on this faraway island, and Prospero has become an entertainer in a rather John Osborne mood.

The particular coup of this interpretation is the casting of Cassavetes - an actor of Greek origin, and a film-maker whose own work (*Shadows, Husbands, Opening Night*) has concerned itself, Prospero-like, with the "reality" of acting, with the

Mid-life crises

Richard Combs

Tempest
Various cinemas

Restlessness, urban angst, women's liberation, male menopause - from *Bob and Carol and Ted and Alice* to *An Unmarried Woman*, Paul Mazursky's bantering comedies have clocked up more than their share of contemporary discontents. And, in the process, Mazursky himself now seems to have been overtaken by a mid-life crisis, by a need to try out other forms than hip New York comedy. This may be a kind of insecurity peculiar to New York film-makers, since Mazursky follows Woody Allen in this cultural quest. But Allen at least was lucky in finding Ingmar Bergman fairly early in his career, where one suspects that Mazursky has not yet found his model. His previous film, *Willie & Phil*, modelled itself after *Jules et Jim*, and now he has made even freer with Shakespeare. The result, however, is surprising in two ways, both related to its wayward length of nearly two-and-a-half hours. It is more ambitious than one might have expected - not in terms of Shakespearean interpretation, but in the tenacity with which it worries at its characters who have become "stuck" in life - and more enjoyable in its show-business indulgence.

It's a structure which also allows the women to come into their own. Both Mazursky's Ariel (Sarandon) and Miranda establish themselves spiritedly in the space that has been vacated by the "magician" in their lives. Only Mazursky's need to round this dream with a return to Manhattan, a return to cultural certainties, recalls the gibbous of his other films. The need for New York is evidently so strong among its native film-makers (vide Woody Allen) that it amounts to a kind of blinkered vision. Ironically, it is the "nowhere" land of Los Angeles and Hollywood (an area certainly despised by this East Coast fraternity) that has produced work - John Ford's last film, *7 Women*, for instance - that is closest to the artistic vision of the Shakespearean *Tempest*.

Shakespeare in Perspective prints the commentaries on the first of fifteen BBC Shakespeare productions (279pp. BBC, £3.95, 0 563 16505 7).

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Alexander Solzhenitsyn

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Observer

John Hutton's first novel, 29 Herriot Street, was short-listed for the 1980 Arts Council National Book Awards. It has just been published in paperback by Granada.

0370 30486 £ 27-50

Craig Nova The Good Son

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BODLEY HEAD

commentary



'God the Father and an angel', (1646), a drawing by Guercino included in the exhibition of Italian Drawings from the Luigi Collection, Institute Néerlandais, Paris, on show at the British Museum until May 15.

Monologues and miracles

Clive Sinclair

MARTIN SHERMAN
Messiah
Aldwych Theatre

'No chapter in the history of the Jewish people during the last several hundred years has been as shrouded in mystery as that of the Sabbatian movement', wrote Gershom Scholem in *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*. Perhaps that is why the story of Sabbatai Sevi has attracted so many writers: lacking Scholem's scholarly constraints they can replace historical reconstruction with imaginative speculation. In brief, Sabbatai Sevi lived from 1626 until 1676. He was born in Smyrna and spent his early career as a peripatetic rabbi, something of a holy sinner, tottering between states of ecstasy and melancholy. His obscurity ended when he fell in with a prophet called Nathan of Gaza. There, in 1665, with Nathan's blessing, he declared himself the Messiah. The rest is history—or fiction.

Isaac Bashevis Singer's *Satan in Gorys* is a paradoxical warning against the removal of the restraints between imagination and action, exemplified in the novel by corrupt kabbalists who take sexual metaphors literally, a sin Singer himself committed in writing the novel. Rechele, his heroine, having conceived the Messiah in her mind, is possessed by a dybbuk and dies in a grotesque parody of childbirth. In Barnett Litvinoff's *Another Time, Another Voice* Sabbatai Sevi was a hippie-like mystic, misguided by unscrupulous managers; despite the title the message was contemporary (circa 1971). Now Martin Sherman, provoked by the Jonestown massacre, has also been drawn to the mystery of the Sabbatian movement. Like Singer he sets his drama in a Polish shtetl or Jewish village, all of which were susceptible to messianic rumours after the pogroms of 1648. Sherman's subject is not Sevi's motivation but his effect upon a small community; in particular on a book-toothed matron, her dumbfounded mother, her husband and her nephew-by-marriage.

Maureen Lipman plays Rachel, a rationalist variant of Singer's famous schlemiel. While Gimpel the Fool is ready to take people at their word when they tell him that the Messiah has come to Frankfurt, Rachel requires proof, and asks God for a sign. She is on familiar terms with the Almighty, though her conversations are one-sided—in other words, she delivers many monologues. Indeed, monologues make up a great part of the play. This is fine when they're Rachel's because, as someone complains, she's always got a smart answer. Otherwise the monologues are

gnomic wisdom; the former speeches tend to be plodders, the latter outright sororities.

Essentially Sherman has written a love story distinguished by an unusual plot, which goes something like this. The ugly Rachel marries an older man, Reb Ellis, to escape the curse of a spinsterhood, acquiring also a beautiful nephew. On their wedding day this nephew, Asher, bursts in with news that the Messiah has come. In time even Reb Ellis is converted, so that he disposes of all his worldly goods and climbs onto his roof from which he intends to fly to Jerusalem. At first Rachel pleads with him to come down, until it occurs to her that his flight might be the sign she requires, so she yells 'Jump!' He crashes, leaving Rachel a widow. Asher decides to go to Constantinople to see the Messiah, and Rachel is persuaded to accompany him by the miracle of her mother, the hitherto speechless Rebecca, shouting 'Sabbatai! to Constantinople! Rachel and Asher make love because Sabbatai has announced that everything once forbidden is now permitted.'

So long as the story of Sabbatai Sevi is an integral part of the plot (as it is in the above events) the play holds together. It falls apart because in Act Two Shlirin Taylor (playing Sarah, Sabbatai's wife) has to recite an interminable monologue which has the effect of deadening Rebecca's only speech, which is neither dramatic nor moving, though it records the events that caused her to bite her tongue. What should be the intellectual core of the play—the denunciation of a cosmic God in favour of a humanistic Messiah—consequently suffers the same fate as earthbound Reb Ellis. Furthermore, a fascinating contradiction gets lost; Sabbatai, the false Messiah, grants Rachel her only happiness, but at the expense of her intelligence (not to mention Reb Ellis's life).

Not that Lipman's performance is anything but intelligent, thanks to the fine line Sherman has provided for her. The other actors are less well-served. Jack Klaff (who plays Asher) suffers most from Sherman's determination to force contemporary significance upon the play. Although a religious zealot he is required to speak of his former 'spiritual oppression', an idea that would never have crossed his mind. Worse, this burlesque character is given the lines, 'The problem is so many people are beating themselves with nettles that there are no nettles left.' It is meant to be a humorous joke; and it is witty, but it has nothing to do with reality. Has Sherman never tried to clear nettles from a garden? They are perpetual.

This is symptomatic of a play that fails to turn imagination into action. It depends upon language for its effect, but at the crucial moments the language disconnects.

Sparring partnerings

Peter Kemp

The Captain's Doll
BBC 2

During his stay in Taos, New Mexico, D. H. Lawrence was given a surprise. His hostess there, Mabel Luman, one day presented herself to him kitted out in clothes—white stockings, long full skirts—like those his mother used to wear. She had resolved, she later confided in her memoirs, to play her part in satisfying what she saw as a 'need of his to be entirely surrounded by all sorts and sizes of persons dressed like his mother'. For Lawrence, though, Mabel's attempt to extend a helping hand to his Oedipus complex must have seemed the materialization of a nightmare. Women, he always fears, may want to treat their men as that mother. His writing shows him using many twists and squirms to struggle free of such a suffocating clutch. And nowhere more so than in *The Captain's Doll*. Its central image—a doll-like effigy of the male—embodies his apprehensions of what women might like their men to be: diminished, passive, hugged, manipulated. Its central doctrine—that wives should offer 'Honour and obedience: and the proper physical feelings'—is one of his charms to keep vampire 'love' at bay.

James Saunders's adaptation of the tale slightly shifts its emphasis. Interpolated scenes throw greater weight onto its satiric look at shallow, casual sex. As a result, the basic contrast seemed to be not between a cloyingly intimate relationship and something less stifling, but between easy, temporary partnerings and one that is more demanding but more permanent. There were other alterations, too. Melodrama was introduced, with some spurious scenes of suspense when Hepburn fears Hannele may have died, and suggestions that his wife could have committed suicide. Apart from this, however, the film did splendid justice to the novella. Largely, this was due to first-rate acting. Jeremy Irons not only looked exactly right as Hepburn, he also managed to empathize convincingly with the man's personality and all his awkward shifts between diffidence and dogmatism.

Flats and sharps

Andrew Hislop

DOUG LUCIE
Hard Feelings
Bush Theatre

That a play set in Brixton explores the politics of power and property and the struggle in a community for individual rights and justice is no great surprise; that there are riots in the streets during the outbreak of disease at the end seems a natural consequence of the quality of the characters' lives. Doug Lucie's *Hard Feelings*, however, never leaves the confines of a poor (ish) rich (ish) girl's flat; its political and moral issues are centred on the power games and sexual intrigues of a community of pad-chasing graduates (riots and blacks are kept firmly off-stage); and the spreading disease, though quintessentially social, is classlessly venereal.

A link, though, between the external boomer and the internal botheration is provided by Tone (Stephen Tiller). A working-class, left-wing journalist and committed boyfriend of would-be solicitor Jane (Jennifer Landon), the eldest (and most persecuted) of the lodgers, he swaps projectiles with the police outside, and abuse, blows and sections of the Sunday papers with various members of the household indoors. Such versatility takes its physical toll. He is cut above an eye by

Gila von Weitershausen, a warm, sarcastic Hannele, was captivated by a woman who is captivated. And though Jane Lapoviste was, strictly, too tall for Hepburn's wife—one of the story's ironies is that the woman who makes a doll of her husband is herself doll-like—she was perfect in every other way. The predatory prattle and the rattling jewellered possessiveness were portrayed with polished comic veneer, the fey egotism and peaky aggression beautifully caught.

Opening with the sight of a medical soldier, the film stressed the anti-war aspects of *The Captain's Doll*. Tommies tramped triumphantly over the cobbles of Cologne. Demons, Germans and Austrians behaved with embittered frivolity. Returned to England after his wife's death, Hepburn finds himself doubly demobilized: discharged from his role as soldier and as husband. Entering the story's summary here, the film enlarged entertainingly on its disorientation in a world of cockles, ragtime from home gramophones, and shingled flappers semaphoring their availability. This way of life, captured in a slyly sardonic cameo, was finally set against something more elemental. Rejoining Hannele in Austria, Hepburn persuades her to visit a glacier with him. In the story this is presented in emphatically erotic terms: the visits include a 'cliff' with black trees like hair flourishing in this secret, naked place of the east. Skirting such sexual scenery, the film confined itself to the psychological and emotional sparring between the couple. As Hannele and Hepburn scrambled their ungainly, persistent way over the rough ground, doing so with an elevated emotion were less than in the background, Hepburn denounces her as 'passing itself off as ecstasy. Even the rivetingly intelligent performance put in by the two protagonists, the pleonastic special pleading, Hannele, Hepburn's wife, may have made a puppet of him, but he now seems a stringer he alone. It's hard to imagine, though, how the story must have been presented, any more appealingly and much more perceptively than it was in this version.

It's difficult to see exactly why *BOP* should have inspired such warm affection from generations of readers and journalists, though a clue is given by a letter I received in 1949. The letter came from Germany: 'My English pen-friend sends me *B.O.P.* every month. It helps me to get a wonderful picture of how the average British boy lives.' That may be unreliable sociology but it probably indicates only that the pen-friend had found they shared many tastes and interests. Like most successful periodicals, *BOP* had a fairly restricted audience. Although it liked to assume the 'boys' were the same the whole world over, its main concern was to provide a very special image of British boyhood.

BOP was created by The Religious Trust Society in 1879 in an attempt to draw young readers away from the 'books' and 'penny dreadfuls' of the time. A special committee of the RTS was set up to carry out market research into the magazines available for boys. They were particularly impressed by Samuel Beeton's *Boy's Own Magazine* (1836-1874), which had recently closed, and bought the title: here was the prototype of *BOP*. The new periodical was to be 'sound and healthy' in tone,

and on his arm by Viv (Frances Barber), the deceitful, vulgar, seductive, careerless first-cousin of courtesy of her own very own (parrots). Viv harbours a secret passion for Jane which turns to hate when the open with Anne (Diana Rigg) who makes 'fashionable' and 'glamorous' collages of Hitler and other beavers away a little too readily at model, and steals, or rather 'borrows', Annie's boyfriend, Rusty (the Reddington). A pop-singing sparrow, precious but of little worth, Rusty is always prepared to cash in sexually on his moral bankruptcy. The merry band is completed by The Merry Band of Pirates (Chris Jury), a purveyor of pirates who shows some sympathy with but belongs to the original little and is crippled by moral compromise. He saves her from unjust expulsion from her flat. He does, though, show some spirit in helping to scupper the plans of the leader of some striking Frisbee demonstrators and, in return, moanages to persuade the Frisbee physical comfort (and some sexual discomfort).

Lucie's concentration on this social microcosm—worked out dramatically because his characters are wonderfully witty and perceptive (though the added touch of Hitlerian graphics is a little off) and because his cast, skilfully directed by Mike Bradwell, is so

TLS

Children's books

The image of British boyhood

Peter Keating

Jack Cox

Take a Cold Tub, Sir! The story of the Boy's Own Paper
Lutterworth, £8.95.
01788 25055

Take a Cold Tub, Sir! is a companion volume to *Great-Grandma's War*, Wendy Forrester's evocation of *The Girl's Own Paper* (which was reviewed in the TLS of August 15, 1980); like the earlier book it is an enjoyable mixture of anthology and commentary. There are, however, some significant differences. Wendy Forrester made her compilation as an enthusiastic reader and collector of *G.O.P.* She restricted her coverage to the Victorian years and provided a useful analysis of the paper's content. Jack Cox was editor of *The Boy's Own Paper* from 1946 until it finally closed in 1967. He aims to cover the whole eighty-eight years of *B.O.P.*'s existence, to take the nature of the content for granted, and, inevitably, gives an insider's view, with a special concentration on the personalities of the paper's various editors. It is sad to record that Jack Cox died in 1981. He had completed the writing of the greater part of *Take a Cold Tub, Sir!* but did not have an opportunity to revise a final draft for publication. In a tribute to him the publishers describe his work on the manuscript as 'a labour of love', and that is apparent on every page.

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and the Committee noted with something like regret that it would be 'impossible' to exclude from it 'the notice of athletic sports and games'. That clearly embodied a recognition that the older kinds of moralistic publications favoured by the RTS would not serve present purposes: *BOP* had to compete in the new late Victorian mass-market. It was this combination of moral control exerted by the RTS and the commercial experience of its first managing editor, George Andrew Hutchinson, that brought immediate success to *BOP*. In the early days it cost one penny and was published weekly.

early number of *BOP*, and he was commissioned to write more. But Kingston learnt that he was suffering from a fatal illness and instead of a stirring tale of the Arctic wastes he submitted an equally stirring personal letter to his readers. It appeared in *BOP*, together with a presentation portrait, shortly after his death. Kingston thanked his readers for all the pleasure they had given him and assured them that he was 'leaving this life in unspendable happiness because I reat my soul on my Saviour'. He closed his letter: 'Dear Boys, I ask you to give your hearts to Christ, and earnestly pray that all of you may meet me in



Edward Gorey's idea of a very notorious couple of cats. *Mungojerrie and Rumpletz* from Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats by T. S. Eliot, with drawings by Gorey (Faber, £4.95, 0 371 11971 9).

The opening number featured 'My First Football Match' by Talbot Beunes Reed who more than any other writer set the public-school tone of decency and fair-play that was to be so characteristic of the paper. Reed was the perfect contributor, enormously popular and totally indifferent to payment for his work. Novels such as *The Adventures of a Three-Guinea Watch* and *The Fifth Form at St. Donnell's* were first serialized in *BOP* and the copyrights made over to the RTS as part of Reed's service to 'Christian literature'.

Reed's connection with *BOP* was, however, exceptional. It was far more usual for the editor to seek out established writers to provide suitable adventure stories. W. H. G. Kingston—author of the celebrated *Peter the Whaler*—contributed a serial, *Powder Monkey to Admiral*, to an

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True to their religious traditions the RTS were always uneasy about the central place given to fiction, and Jack Cox shared that concern. As editor in the 1950s he regretted that a decision was not taken to drop fiction and 'go all out for a practical-interest paper'. It must be doubtful whether any policy change at that late date could have saved *BOP*, but it is certainly true that a strong part of the paper's appeal lay in the interest it generated in practical and technological topics. 'How it Works' articles ranged from bicycles to pre-driven racing cars, from the gramophone to television. Discussions of country-craft, scouting, and hobbies of every possible kind, were always popular: fundamental social and moral values may greatly have changed during its lifetime, but *BOP* managed to keep up-to-date with the modern boy's various sparetime interests. Stamp-collecting was, apparently, the only hobby to be featured throughout the entire life of *BOP*.

But, if the rather eccentric title of this book is any guide, it was the correspondence column that made the most memorable contribution to the paper's braising tone. The advice 'Take a Cold Tub, Sir' for 'Man' came from Dr Gordon Stables who, under the pseudonym 'Medicus', also contributed a medical column to *G.O.P.* Dr. Stables, from the London School of Best Writer, was a doctor of the law, and was certainly the weirdest. His own life story would have been rejected as too fanciful by any respectable fiction editor. He was born in Banffshire, studied medicine at Aberdeen University, and while a student took part in a whaling expedition. The ship was trapped in an ice-pack and reported as lost. When he returned home he found his family in mourning for him. He then served as a surgeon in the Royal Navy, became a recognized authority on dogs and 'kennel editor' of the *Livestock Journal* before joining *BOP*. He wrote adventure stories which could be published only after a good deal of sub-editing, but in exchange for these silent favours he provided *BOP* with its immensely popular column 'Health Hints for Growing Boys' and invaluable publicity.

Every summer he took to the road in his 'hand yacht', a gigantic horse-drawn caravan. He was accompanied by a coachman, valet, cook

and a parrot. They carried with them a startling collection of objects which included a violin, harmonium, and guitar, a Royal Navy sword and 'a good revolver'. It was now that Dr Stables did most of his writing for *BOP*: in the winter he retired to his Berkshire home with his wife, six children and countless dogs.

On the road in summer Dr Stables made regular stops so that he could receive the gifts of fresh food presented to him by *BOP* admirers. He would respond by giving a lecture on the need to lead healthy lives. He set an example by taking a tub in the open air every morning 'with two buckets of cold water, an enormous sponge, a hunk of hard yellow soap, and a very hairy, rough towel the size of a double-bed sheet.' Together with plenty of fresh air, sensible food, no smoking, and regular exercise, the cold tub was Dr Stables' suggested cure for most adolescent ills.

Queries on subjects other than health could be treated with an editorial brusqueness that made Dr Stables seem tame. Jack Cox says that most answers were 'straightforward and informative' but even he cannot resist printing the ruder examples. 'A man must always take the nationality of his father' one correspondent was told. 'Does your relative think he is a Welshman by any chance? If so he had better think again.' Another correspondent received the information he asked for but it was hardly encouraging: 'The fact of your being a tradesman's son would not, of itself, be a bar to your becoming an officer in the army; but a far higher standard of education would be required of you.'

Some of the most interesting queries were from apprentices worried by work conditions. The editor responded with a paternal heaviness that seems to mingle sympathy with a fear that he himself might be accused of encouraging discontent. His advice is strongly on the side of 'conciliation', 'a little respectful remonstrance with your master', and 'willing obedience'. He insists that 'to talk too much of rights and what you can claim' in the way of holidays is a serious mistake. Behind the advice is the editorial conviction that complaints are really a sign of weak character. An 'anxious mother', concerned at the long hours her son was having to work as an apprentice ironmonger was comforted with, 'Better for a man that he wear the yoke in his youth.'

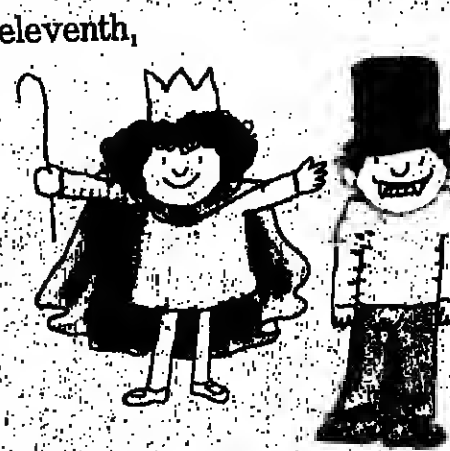
That was the true message of *BOP*. Boys were encouraged to enjoy being boys, but they were never allowed to forget that it was Men that Britain really needed.

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Have you seen them all?



A blueprint for fun

Gavin Ewart

IAN DURY (Editor)
Hard Lines: New Poetry and Prose
Faber. £1.95.
0 571 13073 9

The voice of the teenager, and of his spiritual associates, is heard throughout the land; and adolescent revolt (which in its purest form hates everybody — no exceptions — over twenty-five) changes its vocabulary and its terminology. As in the left wing political poetry of the 1930s, which fifty years ago I was glad to write, there is more heat than light in most of it. But, as the wise and tolerant pedagogues say (easily the most infuriating thing they could possibly say) rebellion in the young is natural, to be expected, in its way quite a good thing, and you'll grow out of it.

Possibly the saddest thing about a collection of previously unpublished work is that very often they do grow out of it. Thatcherism and economic imperatives take over, it's every man or woman for himself or herself; and the generous impulses, the idealism and the commonsense, are sacrificed to the need for a living wage. Good writing, in people of this age, occurs almost accidentally, largely influenced by what they have recently experienced and shedding styles. With the talented ones (and in a sense all of them are sleepwalkers) there is a kind of pre-echo, of the sort that some old LPs used to have, when you could hear the note sung by the singer before she sang it "for real". This is the indication of what is to come, what pompous people over forty call "promise".

Some of these writers have more of this than others. At this stage, head-patting is not in order. It would be

wrong to encourage some, if this is going to make others feel that they've failed. The individual English teacher is the one to give encouragement and make suggestions. Ian Dury's manifesto, "About this book", states: We all have brains and feelings. We are all equally capable of changing the world by creating a world of our own.

That last line has a subjective ring about it and it's perhaps too open to interpretation (is that "world of our own" in our own heads or in reality, in actuality?). Elsewhere, apart from propounding sex colleges and model airplane colleges, Dury says a lot that William Morris said in *News From Nowhere* (1891) — though good ideas don't necessarily become less good with the passage of time. "Manual labour will become a healthy weekend pastime", for example, and "Absorbing and demanding self-employment will be the order of the day". Music, drawing, writing and fun will be compulsory school subjects from the age of 3. "Perhaps the worst one can say of this (trendy idealistic claptrap according to some) is that it publishes a blueprint for 'fun' might be difficult. Things that turn out to be fun usually do so by accident, they can't be put on a curriculum ('Rarely, rarely, comest thou/Spirit of Delight!'). "Looking on the bright side, perpetual progress is inevitable." Yes, but first we've got to get past The Bomb somehow — one way or the other.

Hypocrisy about sex, about class, about colour is not to be found in this book. On the other hand honesty, truth and the willingness to look an idea in the face are virtues in both the poems and the prose pieces. The drawings are likewise realistic, simple and effective. Some of the poems might be the mature work of E. J. Thribb; some of them might be E. J. Thribb (when he used rhyme). Others

are a good deal better than this. Pop songs, Adrian Henri, Roger McGough, West Indian music, seem detectable from time to time in the background. Masturbation, glue-sniffing, academic malpractices, the threat of nuclear war, the ferociousness of conventional jobs and the conjugal treadmill; they all get a mention.

This all takes me back to 1933, to the time when my own seventeen-year-old poems were published in *New Verse* and *The Listener*, and one line pinched from Havelock Ellis ("My penis is nine inches 'long'") was censored, by Orison or my English teacher, I forget which. Should preconscious publication be encouraged? Doesn't it lead to self-consciousness, even to the kind of "inner circle" feeling of being part of an elite that is satirized here in a reference to adult writers? "They all know each other and go to the same literary receptions and evenings and send each other postcards."

I don't think my own early publication did me any harm. I never thought I was Shakespeare. I was proud to be in print, but not inordinately so. In any case, part of Ian Dury's contention (he's "Britain's most articulate spokesman for rock n' roll" according to *The Sunday Times* and has a "legendary" band, The Blockheads) is that anybody (or almost anybody) can do it, and everybody should have a go. In this he is in agreement with the late Lord Stanley of Alderley, a very different character, who wrote a book urging everybody to write, illustrated with his own poems. The publishers of *Hard Lines* do in fact invite contributions for a proposed follow-up.

The closing date for this year's W. H. Smith Young Writers' Competition is February 28. The competition, which celebrates its silver jubilee this year, awards prizes to poetry, prose and plays submitted by young writers.

Modern monsters

Tom Shippey

KEVIN CROSSLEY-HOLLAND:
Beowulf
Illustrated by Charles Keeping
Oxford University Press. £4.50.
019 279770 0

The theory of evolution is mighty yet; and one of its commonest corollaries in the literary world is the belief that ancient art is appropriate now to children, so that the myths of Asgard survive as a Puffin book, Robin Hood reappears as a Disney fox, and most modern Arthurs have turned into adolescent Ingénus defeated continually by an adult sophistication they cannot match.

It is true that the naivety of that belief will be seen immediately by anyone who really appreciates ancient art; but this does not make it easier for such people to produce (as in this case) a child's version of *Beowulf*. Something of the original has to be kept. But most of that original is too dark, hard-hearted and (especially) convoluted for any but an adult understanding to reach. What kind of compromise should one aim at, then? For compromise it has to be.

Charles Keeping's illustrations show particularly well the struggle between fidelity and contemporary appeal. Something of the genuine Anglo-Saxon love of unfocused complexity comes over in the myriad details round the edge of the drawings: every brooch, buckle, sword-hilt and mead-horn has its tiny, inked-in, individual, wavy pattern. Totally modern, by contrast, is the wayward individualism of the warriors' faces, with straggling hair, sagging eyes and stumpy teeth all seeming to say "This is what lay behind the ideal."

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In winter-bound garths. Keeping rides heavily there on shading, with blond hair and flesh from which only sharp outlined claws stick out, like the rock and rocks against the mist-shrouded monsters' lake. Children, I would guess, would find these drawings disturbing: they have the impact of a M.R. James ghost story rather than of a Maurice Sendak "Wild Thing".

And then there is the hero. Even a child is going to notice that in these pictures Beowulf looks stupid. His face is too broad and his nose too small. Insight. Is this another case of the modern looking patronizingly back down the evolutionary ladder? Or is it a response to the original poem, in which indeed the outgoing confidence of the hero is whittled down by the need to a brave despair that can, in the end, point only to a lifelong if winless integrity: "I was seven winters when the lord of treasures took me from my father..."

This last feeling, I think, can no longer be communicated easily. Now and then cheap palliations come ready-made, and death is rarely inflicted. Still, Kevin Crossley-Holland's fair try at blending ancient and modern, like his illustrations. Modern are the guns, buttocks, bawling and tooth-pickings that remind us how the old days people were still people. Ancient is the mood of involved doom, in which adopting one son seems disinheriting another, victory means casualties, and talking about such matters is not only useless but probably unlucky as well. The end of *Beowulf* was always in the telling of the story, so that reducing it to a word-novella must inevitably be rash. This is a thoughtful and respectful retelling, though, in which writer and illustrator have helped each other. Wisely, the translator has kept a few words over to give the poem's full unexpected summary of his last character straight: "They said that all things on earth he was the best, the most gentle, the most just to his people, the most eager for fame."

Marks of progress

Brian Alderson

HANNELORE DAUBERT, KLAUS DODERER and others (Editors)
Lexikon der Kinder- und Jugendliteratur: Ergänzungs- und Registerband
713pp. Weinheim: Beltz Verlag.
DM 168
3 407 56514 3

The three main volumes of this hefty encyclopedia were published between 1975 and 1979. In his preface to the last, which ran from P to Z, the director of the whole enterprise, Klaus Doderer, gave promise of the present supplementary volume, which brings him to the end of some twenty years of work. As he recognizes, you cannot produce a reference book on this scale, published by instalments, without failing to take on board in the early stages some constituents which are clearly called for as progress continues. In consequence we find, here, as in the other volumes, a host of articles — especially in the A to O section — about people, countries or ideas which have shown themselves to have a significance commensurate with that of the founder-members. (Among them are some forty-seven rather uneven articles on subjects from the English-speaking world, from Adams, Richard to Zindler, Paul — though Zemann, Msrgot, while arguably a more eligible "Z" still remains embedded in "USA".)

As well as the 561 pages devoted to these articles there are 140 given over to the two indexes of people and subjects. The first of these is straightforward enough, not only integrating the new arrivals into the main alphabetical sequence but also recording the names of individuals (like Margot Zemann) who receive passing mention in other places. The second index, a fifty-column affair, is altogether more ambitious, since it

attempts to go beyond merely listing the subject articles. "Aufklärung", say, in order to be the presence of the idea in other places. In a number of instances this leads to impossible strings of figures. For example, "Aufklärung" has 100 hundred and eleven references; "see also 'Aufklärungsmagazin'" where there are thirty-two more. The curious reader will gain from the list some sense of the editorial direction of the encyclopedia as a whole. As Professor Doderer himself says, it aims to be more than a mere record of names and dates, and both to the choice of articles and to the encouragement of critical comment it seeks to bring out some of the arguments with which the subject of children's literature is fraught.

As the subject-index delves through its strings of figures under the head-words as "Bürgertum" or "Sozialistische", the encyclopedia tends to politicize its commentary in a peculiarly German way, and it does so with wildly fluctuating emphasis (foreigners for instance are always dogmatically treated). It is not an opinion however, even Professor Doderer acknowledges that you cannot satisfactorily count on weight and uniformity of a work which has some four hundred contributors.

Despite the shortcomings, the book is a triumphal example of editorial stamina and there can be nothing to praise the tenacity with which the editors have sought to make the *Lexikon* complete and as factually correct as possible. We may soon be in a position to judge whether the "realist" rather than the individual approach to the compilation of reference books, but whatever handbooks may be, such encouragement to research and such funding as this solid and dependable work.

Short and easy: junior fiction

Ann Thwaite

Jane Gardam once said that she wrote her books because she so badly wanted to write them. "I think I would probably have died if I hadn't written *A Few Fair Days*", she confessed a little extravagantly, in Edward Bilshen's *Thorny Paradise* (1975). Although her Blackbird *Bridges* and *Willow* series were the only book written for a series ever to be shortlisted for a major prize, even Jane Gardam's individuality is eclipsed by the series formula. One feels nobody needs to write a Blackbird, a Gazelle, an Antelope or a Hopscotch book. They are often attractive enough books, books which serve a useful purpose, but rarely are they stories which linger in the mind, that enrich and delight.

And yet it is just at this stage when children are still having to work at the decoding, when reading is still a bit of an effort, that they need to be assured that the whole troublesome business is really worthwhile. The contents of these early solo reading books may determine whether a child becomes a real reader rather than merely someone who can read. Many of us feel that these "bridge" books, intended to wean children away from picture books and easy readers and on to longer, solid texts, should always be read alongside picture books, that the teacher or librarian is wrong who believes an Antelope is proper material for a seven or eight year old but that Graham Oakley's *Church* is not, for instance, are a foolish indulgence, and should have been listened to years before.

Linda's Lie by Bernard Ashley has a small claim to fame in being the first book to have its title in the series. It is not as if these short easy books have rigidly controlled vocabularies. Most of the "control" is merely the publisher's decreeing the book's brevity, its black and white illustrations, and a splashy typeface and this goes for the books at this reading level outside the series format, too. The main advantage of the series is that it enables the publisher to knock a pound or two off the price. The words themselves, and even the sentence structure, may be just as difficult as in the most eccentric picture book. "Porcupines only attack humans if you make them angry", one of a recent batch of *Gazelles* begins. Not an easy sentence.

One might rather the young reader was being told "Miss Fidget Wonkham-Sing", who wore an iron hat and took no nonsense from anyone. Employment of course is the first consideration at this stage. Our main service to the reader is to find books that he can enjoy. Beverly Cleary, the American writer, wrote recently in the *Horn Book Magazine* of the depressing questions children write to ask her, with their teachers breathing down their necks. They have apparently been trained to look for morals and lessons even in Ms Cleary's funny stories. "I like *Runaway Ralph*", one child writes, "because it taught me to

be satisfied with what I have", and another asks "Is the moral of *Henry Huggins* if you find a dog without a collar, you get to keep it?"

There is time when the skill is totally mastered for the challenges and the underlying messages, and there are few lessons in this collection, though there are lots of good school stories, including *The School Donkey*, *Monster Monday* (a surefire idea, with a dinosaur turning up in the school playground), *Bernie's Bird*, *Secrets* and *The Sky-Blue Dragon*. The story that I liked most in this category was *The Steel Band* by Wendy Green, perhaps because (as the dedication reveals) it has its roots very firmly in reality. The children are real children, though it is wish-fulfillment stuff. The band plays at the Albert Hall, just as the play in *Secrets* is performed before the Queen and Class Four's *Dragon* is chosen for the Mayor's procession. Of the other Antelopes, I think children will like best *The Running of the Deer* by the accomplished professional, Geoffrey Tease. It is an exciting and convincing story of children involved in the arresting of a gang of deer poachers.

There is no doubt that children do like exciting stories — however unconvincing. And there will undoubtedly be satisfied readers for *Ask Oliver: the Mystery of the Missing Diamond* by Terrance Dicks, in spite of its rather offputtingly large black typeface. It is much more successful, because much more simply constructed, than the rather similar *Whizz Kid* by Sarah McNeill, though that does have the useful ancillary purpose of showing a disabled child at the centre of the action.

Linda's Lie by Bernard Ashley has a small claim to fame in being the first

MARY COCKERT: *The School Donkey*. Illustrated by Valerie Littlewood. (Gazelle.) Hamish Hamilton. £1.95. 0 241 10824 1

ANNE FORSYTH: *Monster Monday*. Illustrated by Sally Holmes. (Gazelle.) Hamish Hamilton. £1.95. 0 241 10910 8

GERALDINE KAYE: *The Sky-Blue Dragon*. Illustrated by Glenys Ambrose. (Hopscotch.) Hodder and Stoughton. £2.95. 0 340 28215 0

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FRANCES THOMAS: *Secrets*. Illustrated by Laszlo Acs. (Antelope.) Hamish Hamilton. £2.75. 0 240 10882 9

WENDY GREEN: *The Steel Band*. Illustrated by Jennifer Northway. (Antelope.) Hamish Hamilton. £2.75. 0 241 10777 6

GEORGE TEASE: *The Running of the Deer*. Illustrated by Maureen Bradley. (Antelope.) Hamish Hamilton. £2.75. 0 241 10777 6

book to anticipate the arrival of pound pieces. More importantly it does manage to tell a good story while facing up to the sort of small problems which can so easily escalate and dominate children's lives. "Lying was easier than she thought. All you had to do was say it." But of course it is afterwards that the things get complicated. The other Blackbird in this batch is pure nonsense, and a very enjoyable nonsense too. *Shepherd's Pie* tells the story of the last giants in the world, who believe that shepherd's pie must be made of real shepherds, a cause for considerable alarm if your Dad happens to be a shepherd.

It is difficult to be sure what will make children laugh. Kornei Chukovsky once defined it as the "topsy-turvy", and the popularity of Donald Bisset's nonsense stories, unreadable to most adults, is a good instance of this appeal. The new Bisset is *The Joyous Adventures of Snakey Boo*. Snakey Boo is the captain of a boat which has a frog door in its side for Garth Frog, just as snuses have cut doors. In the never the small fish carry umbrellas as anti-pike protection, and Hogarth mutes "I won't water lovely and well" wouldn't it be awful if it was dry? Bisset's own rather amateurish drawings embellish the pages as usual. No possible morals here. Nor indeed in the much more sophisticated, wilder comedy of *The Great Snail Robbery* by Roger McGough. Ignore the uninviting jacket. Once inside it is lavishly and splendidly illustrated. This is compulsive stuff, full of encouragement and surprises, from somewhere on the edge of that popular territory occupied by *Fungus the Bogeyman* and *The Twiss*. Somewhere not very far too from Miss Fidget Wonkham-Sing.

(Antelope.) Hamish Hamilton. £2.75. 0 240 10789 X

SARAH MCNEILL: *Whizz Kid*. Illustrated by Trevor Stubley. (Antelope.) Hamish Hamilton. £2.75. 0 240 10877 2

TERRENCE DICKS: *Ask Oliver: the Mystery of the Missing Diamond*. Illustrated by Valerie Littlewood. (Hopscotch.) Hodder and Stoughton. £2.95. 0 340 28215 0

BERNARD ASHLEY: *Linda's Lie*. Illustrated by Janet Duchesne. (Blackbird.) Julia MacRae. £2.95. 0 86203 099 4

DOROTHY CLARK: *Shepherd's Pie*. Illustrated by the author. (Blackbird.) Julia MacRae. £2.95. 0 86203 098 6

DONALD BISSET: *The Joyous Adventures of Snakey Boo*. Illustrated by the author. Methuen. £3.95. 0 416 22410 5

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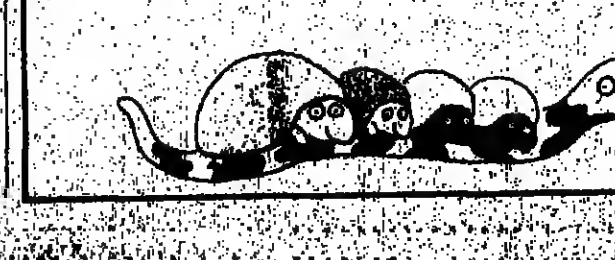
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Judith Elkin

GINA WILSON
The Whisper
Faber. £5.50.
0 571 11930 1

In *The Whisper* Gina Wilson explores the precarious, ever-shifting nature of close relationships. It is a sophisticated attempt to analyse a family's complex reactions to an outsider, demonstrating the destructive potential of individual selfishness, when everyone is too busy with their own lives to accommodate others.

Lily Fry is thirteen, an only child and rather lonely since she and her parents moved to a remote farmhouse. At the beginning of the story, she is looking forward, with mixed feelings, to the imminent arrival of her fourteen-year-old cousin, Marie. Marie is an orphan who has lived happily for the previous year with her grandparents in Scotland, until her grandfather was

taken ill. Marie is a quiet, approachable girl who turns out to be very gifted musically. She fits in easily at school but rather uneasily into life at home. Lily is very confused by Marie's presence, alternately welcoming her, and then resenting the intrusion into her previously stable family and trying to make Marie's life intolerable. Marie's apparently calm self-sufficiency does not help. Neither does the parent's similar confusion which they attempt to hide under their everyday business.

The seeds of jealousy grow in Lily, and Marie demonstrates her musical ability and is quickly accepted at school and in the local church. As the story proceeds, Lily begins to show the unpleasant side of her nature which is normally suppressed. She spreads spiteful gossip which shows Marie in an unprepossessing light and alienates her friends, apart from the ever-loyal Bella. There are times when Lily and Marie are quite close, as they work together for a music festival and the

school concert, but each time something happens to unhinge Lily and send her off on her destructive path. Only towards the end of the book does Lily really begin to warm towards Marie, but by then the spread of gossip has got beyond her control and she finds herself unable to counteract it.

Portraying a character's rapidly changing moods and inconsistencies, while maintaining credibility, is difficult and on the whole Gina Wilson manages this very skilfully. At times, however, the story seems a little far-fetched and, particularly at the beginning, is rather flat. It tends to fluctuate between being written from an adult position, almost as a sociological report, to looking at the problems from the teenager's viewpoint. The author has the ability to create characters in depth but lacks consistency and confidence. Marie is just too "good", too accommodating, displaying none of the predictable reconfigurations against anyone for her to be a real character. The story is a great deal about the complexities of genuine lasting friendship and family loyalty.

Prototypes

Frank Tuohy

ANITA DESAI
The Village by the Sea
157pp. Heinemann. £5.50.
0 34 934364

Founded on fact, *The Village by the Sea* is a beautifully observed account of a poor family living on the coast quite near Bombay. Till now the wealth of the village has depended on fishing, but the future of its inhabitants is threatened by industrial development. Modernization will do little to help them because they are too backward and illiterate to benefit from it. The factories will destroy the natural world, always a magnificently insistent presence in India.

Anita Desai's evocation of the flint shores, the palm-trees, the fishing boats drawn up with their meagre catch is admirable — even though the descriptions at times seem to be somewhat deodorized and tidied up for junior readers or foreign consumption. I wonder, though, how much the names of tropical birds and plants can mean to those who have never seen them. Joseph Conrad, after all, managed to evoke much the same sort of scenery without being able to give a name to the individual elements that composed it.

It is, however, the human beings who are at the centre of the picture: thirteen-year-old Lila, almost the sole support of her sick mother and drunken father, and Hari, her twelve-year-old brother who, following a protest meeting as far as Bombay, stays there in order to seek his fortune. He falls among people of extreme poverty who treat him well, and learns how to mend watches, which may be the beginning of a trade for him. Meanwhile in the village the rich de-

Silvas, who are Christians, take Lila to work for them. They find Lila's mother a place in the local hospital, where she soon recovers her health. The father, too, undergoes a sudden conversion and gives up drinking.

If a story is based on facts, the facts themselves will probably have come to notice because of their resemblance to fiction. Nowadays it is a commonplace to find points of similarity between Indian life, at home and abroad, and the world of Victorian England: reliance on self-help and hard work, family loyalties and the subordination of individual desires. There are survivals too of a hierarchical society. Not surprisingly, therefore, several of Anita Desai's characters seem to have prototypes among the more benevolent personages in Dickens: Mr Scrooge, for example, or Mr de Silva is definitely a Cheeryble. The children are an exception, being treated without sentimentality. Sayid Ali, however, the birdwatcher who takes the de Silvas' house during the monsoon, turns out to be something of a Skimpolee. In the end he is the subject of another sudden conversion, renouncing his own reverence for the natural world and telling Hari to welcome the changes that are coming. "You will give up your traditional way of living . . . You will survive."

This summary dismissal of one of the principal themes of the story — a theme, moreover, which has seemed central to Indian civilization since the days of Gandhi — points to what must be considered a deficiency. These Dickensian characters fail to get involved in anything like a Dickensian intrigue. *The Village by the Sea* is too light in touch, too desultory to involve its readers very deeply. What we have is a series of beautiful pictures and character sketches, which illustrate the passing of time but hardly cohere into a story.

Innermost doubts

Nicholas Tucker

LIZ BERRY
Easy Connections
Gollancz. £5.95.
0 575 03245 6

Her heart seemed to turn over. She closed her eyelids to shut out the hot darkness of his eyes. He bent his head and kissed her on the mouth. He looked at her, his eye wide open and defenceless, the hurt showing. Then he slapped her across the mouth, hard, cutting her lip. Blood trickled down her chin. She made no effort to wipe it away. Her eyes filled with tears.

Not extracts from a Mills and Boon product, nor something lifted from a teenage love comic. They both come from a publisher hitherto possessing one of the best children's lists in the country. This particular book, however, introduces a dimension into current arguments about novels for young people unfamiliar since the great days of Enid Blyton: sheer badness. For if the most immature, narcissistic, deluded young adult could ever write a novel, it would surely be very like this one. It concerns Cathy, a seventeen year old artist-genius, in whose lovely face colour mounts and

drains away as monotonously as water in a choked drain. She is raped in the first chapter by Dev, a millionaire pop singer, and the rest of the story describes how he then finds he needs her after all ("Cathy, I'm not just a picture in the newspaper. I'm real, I'm a human being.") These attentions are not always welcome ("Please Dev, go away. Leave me alone. Let me get on with my life.") But in the end he and Cathy get married all right, and must certainly have made a handsome pair, since both are described as beautiful in the extreme.

The nearest equivalents to *Easy Connections* are those tabloid comics where teenage characters moult clichés to each other about love, life and the difficulties in finding the right fella. In place of the conventions of the romantic picture strip, however, there are various well-tried prose substitutes. When Cathy is moved, her hands tremble wildly and she hesitates at the beginning of certain sentences ("B-But why?" or "W-Where are we going?") When she is really upset, (something that happens very frequently) she goes "paper-white", cool feelings run up and down her spine, and her knees turn either to water or jelly or, in one particular paragraph, both. Such instant descriptions are usually followed by a snatch of dialogue and then a convenient summary of the state of

emotions to date ("She looked at him with hatred. Hating his calm assurance that he had only to make a decision, and everybody would get into line. Hating his lack of remorse. Hating his . . . etc etc) And just to ram home the point even further, characters are untauntingly self-revelatory about their innermost fears, hopes and doubts, articulating their fears introspectively as unselfconsciously as any soliloquizing actor on the Elizabethan stage.

This way, today's new young Elizabethans will also have no trouble in following this banal fantasy, while some may even be moderately gripped by it. I doubt, though, whether any "young adult" will be willing to pay £5.95 for something they could buy at a tenth of that price in one of the story series on sale at local newsagents. It is the hard-pressed school and public library, therefore, that still seems the main client in mind here in that search for the ever-elusive teenage novel that will charm even the most reluctant reader from the treat. But the price is too high, the New England heroine, not just in terms of cost. Cathy, publisher, struggling to maintain a life in a penny-pinching environment, has a difficult job to do, but the answer cannot be to produce books like *Easy Connections*, at least if young readers are ever to know what real literature is all about.

A sense of history

Geoffrey Trease

WINIFRED FINLAY
Secret Rooms and Hiding Places
Kaye and Ward. £4.95.
0 7182 2581 3

With a topic of such perennial fascination to the young, and her own long experience as a storyteller, Mrs Finlay could hardly fail to produce a readable book. She offers, in effect, nine short stories, each based on fact and set in actual places, some of which survive and can be visited, though reconstruction has often obliterated the part that a child would be most anxious to see. There is variety in period, from the late fifteenth century at Minster Lovell to an early Victorian smuggling episode at Fowey, and in geographical distribution as far north as Prince Charles' Highland hide-out at Cluny's Castle. There are Jesuits and Jacobites and Cavalier fugitives, two from the debate at Worcester alone.

The marriage of fact and fiction, though it has embued much to children's literature, is like other marriages not without problems and jarring discords. Mrs Finlay indicates in her brief linking notes when she has

been able to work from a contemporary record, though she gives no explicit help to those modern school-children who are trained to "look things up", and sometimes even want to. Such children — judged at least by the letters (they write to authors — are keen to know just where they stand. Is this bit really true? How do we know what he said and she felt? Whether from a genuine passion for historical truth, or merely with an anxious eye on their own school progress, they seem to have an almost Victorian desire to justify their entertainment with a sense that they have also been edified. This goes with the emphasis on projects, and the proliferation in late years of superb non-fiction books, so that Mrs Finlay's traditional approach, with its invented dialogue and incidents, and guesswork to bridge the awkward gaps in the documentation, is less acceptable than it would have been a generation ago.

She writes, too, in that elevated tone which was once thought proper for the description of anything, however trivial, that belongs to bygone days. A soldier "elects" to guard a particular window, he doesn't just choose to. The servants do not show "open" distrust, it has to be "overt". Nobody wants to impoverish the vocabulary of children's literature. The wild and

strange and musical word delights the young reader, is roughly apprehended from the context, and makes an invaluable, if unobtrusive, contribution to his education. But simplicity has its own virtue, and a time when children are said to be swinging away from historical books the author is digging his own grave. He creates verbal difficulties, compensating artistic gain. This is a book in which candles gutter, and a lastingly and keenly employed by the author. The invented conversations are often stilted and unreal, the sentences so long and heavy with subordinate clauses that the dialogue becomes, in an actor's sense, unspeakable. In these worst passages the book is a blend not so much of fact and fiction as of fact and history. Undoubtedly there are children who still like tushery, but for the critic, calculation should not disown the

There is a lot of useful stuff in these pages. General historical explanation might have been clearer, and the stories might helpfully have been in chronological order. We could have had a few more of the (known, and intriguing) practical details of constructing secret rooms, and not about that remarkable craftsman-martyr, Nicholas Owen.

Torn apart

Tony Bradman

JAN NEEDLE
Piggy in the Middle
Deutsch. £3.95.
0 233 97481 4

Jan Needle is an exciting writer and a prolific one too, having now published over eleven books since 1977 (including a picture book). *Piggy in the Middle* is not one of his best but it is a sharp enough to prick the conscience and inject some serious thinking into the system.

The book tells the story of Sandra Patterson, a cadet policewoman in a south coast town racked (I use the word advisedly; newspaper hacks and their inflammatory headlines play their part in the novel too) by racial tension. Her problem is that she is confused, as the jacket illustration so winsomely demonstrates (Sandra, with her police hat off, wipes her brow in a scene of urban desolation).

Sandra is confused by her police colleagues, many of whom seem to be

openly hostile to "Asians". She is confused by her boyfriend, David, a young reporter who sees a racial angle in almost every story and being a concerned white liberal spends a lot of time trying to ingratiate himself with the immigrant community. Most of all she is confused by her relationship with Brian, a large, handsome policeman with right-wing views and a penchant for random violence. A murder is committed, and an Asian boy is accused. Sandra is involved in the investigation; David is out for a scoop. Soon everything falls apart as organizations from opposite sides of the fence move in, marches are broken up by National Front thugs and heads get broken.

Jan Needle tells a good story, and it is a measure of how far children's books have come that the "good" copper can say of a remand centre: "Another strand in the rich fabric of British injustice. . . It looks like a prison camp. . . A concentration camp. Despicable." But Jan Needle is enough of a realist (in attitude, as well as style) to show us that we are all "piggies in the middle", even the police. "The rot starts at the top", says one character. And all of us below

suffer, policemen, journalists, Asians and Sandra.

As a novel, *Piggy in the Middle* has its problems. Cramping sex, violence, prejudice, an inside look at the police and newspapers and all the rest of it, 154 pages makes the plot crawl like a little breathless. There is also a lot of let-down at the end, after the police and the fury, when Sandra goes to the police and off to the police station. The study of politics and history, but the book is no condescension or sentimentalism in Needle's writing. His use of contemporary dialogue is finely tuned and his books are a pleasure to read. If you are a teenager who wants to see a little more deeply into the world on News at Ten or in the

Early Children's Books: A Collector's Guide by Eric Quayle (256pp. Heinemann. £5.95. 0 7153 6000 0) contains a brief history of children's literature from the sixteenth century to the present. The author, who is a book collector and bibliographer, goes on to give a general guide to the acquisition of children's books, giving advice on genres and valuable illustrated and unillustrated books.

The school of life

Jennifer Moody

LOIS DUNCAN
Stranger with My Face
Hamish Hamilton. £5.50.
0 241 10913 2

JOHN BRANFIELD
Brown Cow
Gollancz. £5.95.
0 575 03245 6

Lois Duncan and John Branfield have taken the bottle-neck period of the late teens as the subject for their latest novels.

Lois Duncan can always be relied upon to get her narrative off to a promising start. Within two pages of beginning *Stranger with My Face* she has named her main characters and their setting, and is leading into the plot, demanded in this case is too high and clear, daughter of a science fiction writer and a painter, becomes aware of a dark presence in her home, a soul, disembodied yet sometimes visible, who moves insidiously in on Laurie's life. This soul, Lia, is Laurie's double. Laurie discovers that, part Navajo Indian, she was adopted as a tiny baby, while her identical twin Lia was placed elsewhere. Lia has become as depraved, indeed murderous, as Laurie is settled and balanced. With the help of two friends, Helen and Jeff, Laurie learns to develop in herself the skills that Lia has already perfected, and projecting her spirit outside her body. And it is only through the affection of Jeff and of Laurie's little sister, Megan, that Lia's attempt to possess herself of Laurie's body and, by extension, satisfactory life-style, is defeated.

The author has written several highly readable novels but it cannot be said that *Stranger with My Face* has the same stature. In the past, Miss Duncan has presented her heroine living in a pleasant and uncomplicated setting, with a personal moral dilemma of real depth, the solution of which has required, and indeed justified, her honest and upright character. This dilemma is lacking here. There is also much emphasis on the edifying evidence of "racial projection", which puts a stop to what at one stage

looks like a promising study of duality in human nature. The Laurie/Lia theme is matched by the physical disfigurement of Jeff in a road accident, which leaves him still handsome when seen from one angle and hideous when viewed from another. It is probably because of this lack of a moral acid test that few of Miss Duncan's characters here achieve the clarity and distinctiveness that are usual in her work, although there is a pleasant quality in her evocation of Laurie's family life, and some shrewd observations of teenage dating and social jockeying. But none of this is enough to elevate this novel above the level of a competently told tale.

Mr Branfield, on the other hand, moves with deliberation into the development of his theme. Invariably setting his earlier novels in Cornwall, he has placed the action of *Brown Cow* in Yorkshire. His hero, Andy, is however a Cornishman with a Cornish name, Trewin and he returns in the summer holidays for a brief interlude in his much loved native county. Back in Yorkshire, he moves through the sixth form of his authoritarian day school, Bywaters, groping experimentally with tall, academic Dorothy and plump, self-possessed Gloria, permitting himself to be groomed for a Cambridge scholarship, enjoying the friendship of ambiguous adults and taking on the headship of his school with shoulder-shrugging resignation. That he feels an outsider among his fellows is epitomized by the way his surname is perpetually anglicized from Trewin into Trewin.

The period the author has chosen is immediately after the end of the Second World War. He fails to capture that dreary time of shortages and exhortations, apart from a few references to coupons and to teachers returning from the Services. There are several well sketched vignettes in the characterization, notably ex-airman turned teacher, Bomber Carrington (Bunter to the boarders) who helps Andy to see himself as Cambridge material, and a historic local journalist, Duncan Smith, who sharpens Andy's appreciation of drama. But all in all it must be said that both characters and plot lack lustre, which is, I suspect, what Mr Branfield feels about anywhere that is not Cornwall.

A gap in time

Dominic Hibberd

PETER HUNT
The Maps of Time
John MacRae. £5.95.
0 8035 119 2

Peter Hunt sets a fascinating time puzzle in this book. A few final clues defeat me but it is an absorbing read. A curious four teenagers and eleven-year-old Sam cycle into Hay-on-Wye for a camping holiday: an arm raised and they are hit by a violent storm. So we have a good start — mystery, instant action and a splendid landscape. Then there are bookshops, one of which (Huot's) is elliptical time to time and leaves the reader a little breathless. There is also a lot of let-down at the end, after the police and the fury, when Sandra goes to the police and off to the police station. The study of politics and history, but the book is no condescension or sentimentalism in Needle's writing. His use of contemporary dialogue is finely tuned and his books are a pleasure to read. If you are a teenager who wants to see a little more deeply into the world on News at Ten or in the

most gets trapped in then. These three options allow the novelist to enjoy himself. One narrative splits into four (now, then, and two versions of imagined now). Now, the disbelieving curate looks for Sam in a silent Victorian farmhouse; the curate of two male authors, and former on the same spot. One in his own now, rescues him from humiliation. Plenty can happen — four times as much as usual, in fact — and there are nice touches of irony and ambiguity. The characters leave Hay in their different times, almost meeting — and Sam undraws his circles. The party, like the narrative, reunites and decides to turn back. But there is another time changer on the mountain: an arm is raised; and they are hit by a violent storm. . . .

I confess to being baffled by the ending. The time machinery is too ingenious, but it does make us think twice — four times — about the art of narrative. The relationship between Mags and Dave, for instance, is deftly revealed. The "point of view" can be interestingly varied, as the teenagers are described in terms of one another's perceptions. "And Sam. Now there was something," thinks the curate, adding aloud, "He's not with us half the time." Was? Is? Like the Curate, we never quite know. This is a stylish first novel. One hopes for another before too much now becomes then.

Heath Robinson: Artist and comic genius, by John Lewis (222pp. Corgi. £5.95. 0 09 461600 0), which was first published in 1973, has recently been reissued in paperback. The book contains a brief biography of the artist and a survey of his work as an illustrator.

The animals' revolt

Alan Brownjohn

NICHOLAS FISK
On the Flip Side
Kestrel. £5.25.
0 7226 5825 7

The Rideouts are a family of cheerful incompatibles — father a harassed science correspondent, mother withdrawn into jumble sales and good causes, Lucas a charming fourth-form dilettante who is unlikely to produce what the examiners want. And twelve-year-old Lettice is the oddest of all, a bright child who talks to animals and obtains answers, answers of alarming import for the world at large. This bawdy household is well drawn in the early pages of Nicholas Fisk's new science fiction tale, but Lettice's bizarre talent soon overwhelms all other interest, not least the author's interest in what else she might be, apart from the recipient of extraordinary communications from an animal kingdom. Should we, and "young readers", want any more characterization than this, any more

human interest, any more warmth about people trapped in a technological nightmare? If we do, it does not come in *On the Flip Side*, as the plot line races away into first a jaunty, then a decidedly creepy, fantasy about the arrival of the Blobs.

The Blobs are a malicious emanation from our own television screens, materialized patterns of lines which emerge to batter human beings for their ecological irresponsibility. The animals sense them first, and Lettice is the one girl in the world who knows why it is the animals have everywhere started to look scared, hissing or grunting at invisible fires, turning against men. Lettice can read the signs, but cannot prevent the animals' revolt, as pigs trample long-distance lorry drivers, dogs torn packs and attack villages, rats swarm over the cities. Mr Fisk contrives some eerie and repellent moments with the rats, and some brisk swiftness at the media (the television scientist, the chat show compe who whose eyes glitter with "warmth, interest, and a sort of knowing inner depth of ruthlessness and self-love"). And two-thirds of the way into escalating chaos and confusion — although some life

seems to go on with comparative normality for the purposes of the plot, and no governments actually declare a State of Emergency — we wonder how he is going to bring the world out of it.

The animals, of course, are the first to discover an answer: the cat takes a simple step sideways into a world where the technology has not been invented; or has somehow been un-invented. You vanish into it by believing that you can, and one by one the stricken members of the human race also take the step. The ecological message of *On the Flip Side* is powerful in intention, and yet muffled in delivery. What will readers make of the weird pre-industrial, or post-industrial, world in which the Rideouts, and the rest of mankind, find themselves on the other side? This recipe has faltered in its denouement, although — like technological mankind perhaps — Mr Fisk's human beings have put themselves in a predicament for which no clear and obvious solution looks possible. The novel is fast, in places unusually delicate in the midst of some standard sci-fi simplification; and finally more than a little ambiguous.

The presence of the past

Colin Greenland

KENNETH LILLINGTON
What Beckoning Ghost?
Feber. £5.25.
0 571 11599 X

EDWARD CHITHAM
Ghost in the Water
Kestrel. £4.95.
0 7226 6471 0

Although children's fiction rarely has a major contribution to make to education for sexual equality, the supposition that sex determines reading preferences remains entrenched. As for as that goes, there are two venerable books for girls. Emma Nash in *What Beckoning Ghost?* and Teresa Willets in *Ghost in the Water* are two young heroines strong in the intuitive and emotional generosity which are traditionally celebrated as female virtues in girls' fiction. Neither of them shows much inclination to challenge the sexist values of the societies they are inhabiting (middle-class Dorset and working-class Birmingham respectively). Encouragingly, however, there is no suggestion that their experience as girls is in any way closed or foreign to the male understanding, because they are two successful ones too. Their stories might be confidently recommended to any imaginative young teenager — except, strange as this may seem, fans of the ghost tale proper. Neither Lillington nor Chitham writes to entice incontinent devotees to the delights of the fleshless. They seek neither to thrill nor to chill, just as both Emma and Teresa realize that screaming and fainting are an inadequate response to a ghost, which affords such stimulating social history project. Each exploration, travelled by the sexual conventions and constraints of her time. There is plenty to fascinate an investigator at Marland Hall, as at Wright's canal bridge.

Emma Nash's subject is she discovers, Emmeline Trimble, eldest daughter of an eighteenth-century servant family at the stately home where Emma now has a summer job serving teas. Emma, supposedly overwrought, is staying with her aunt in Marland to recuperate from the mental strain of O levels, so it is a little surprising how easily she recruits allies for her supernatural quest. Everyone is enthusiastically supportive, from Mrs Maybury, Emma's colleague in the tearoom, to Mr Stanhope the village antique dealer, who cheerfully closes his shop to ferret through documents and examine portraits for her. Emma's Auntie DI is the sort of gem who smiles indulgently when her charge comes in at three in the morning, covered in mud and looking like a ghost. The ghost, however, is only too pleased to go back to Marland Hall for the midnight séance Emma suggests. The council lends her grave diggers, the press give sympathetic publicity. Thus deprived of all possible plot tension, *What Beckoning Ghost?* would collapse into bonality were it not for a repeated configuration that makes shrewd sense of Emmeline's plight and the whole notion of recurrence, ghostly or otherwise. The theme is the inextinguishability of generations, this specific motif the battle of ambitious mothers and suborn daughters. Many of his intended readers may indeed feel that it is the only battle in the world, but to be honest Lillington really should have reminded them there will be others.

The presence of the past is more convincingly conveyed in *Ghost in the Water*. "Once a thing happens, it makes a sort of bump in things, and you can't iron the bump out", muses Teresa Willets. The past goes on flowering, like gorse: "You can divide it, and dig coal and limestone all round it, you can build houses all over it, but you can't kill it." Abigail Parkes, the mine-owner's daughter, killed herself for love on December 10 1860, but the relics of her life keep turning up in Teresa's sampler, a heretofore a ring. The more Teresa reconstructs the more fragments she discovers, and the more she suspects that Abigail's death was not suicide. While Abigail confines her appearances to reverie and dreams, unauthenticated until a final dramatic and unambiguous manifestation, Chitham (unlike Lillington) allows that Teresa's visions may be wholly valid. In this way he

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The Book Marketing Council is organizing three weeks of special promotions of children's books. The campaign is titled "The Magic World of Picture Books" and is intended to reach parents via the book trade. The twenty titles chosen for the promotion include: Kit Williams' *Maskerade* (Faber), Shirley Hughes' *Alfie Gets In First* (Fontana), Iris Schwitter's *Hilda's Rascally Chair* (Penguin), Graham Oakley's *The Church Mouse* (Macmillan), Jill Murray's *Pease Porridge* (Macmillan), Tomi Ungerer's *The Last* (Macmillan), Tomi Ungerer's *The*

not only scores points for psychological realism, but also makes the ghost a metaphor for history itself, like the contours of the past that an imaginative eye can trace through the housing estates and industrial yards of the present. The eye in *Ghost in the Water* is Teresa's, an outgoing, unpretentious Black Country girl who sees things in plain, strong colours and describes them in language as lively and direct as she is herself. Her imagination is to be trusted, as is her author's.

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Michael Hyndman

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Zip the Chip: computer books for children

Harvey Mellor

Cheap personal microcomputers are selling at a tremendous rate, certainly faster than the manufacturers can produce them. Many of these machines are being bought for children, though their parents are often the ones eager to gain access to the much vaunted new information technology.

Having got the machine home and spent a few weeks playing the standard games, most children then want to explore further since they have heard such weird and wondrous tales of what computers can do. Computers have quite definitely not reached the degree of consumer-oriented sophistication that would encourage you to believe the cat could operate one, so parents turn for help to the manual that came with the machine, only to discover that it is badly written and almost unintelligible to the technologically hard of hearing. Even the test manuals are unsuitable for children.

It is to these children and their parents that the Osborne series of books are addressed. They are all very clearly written and brightly and interestingly illustrated, a ten year old would be able to read them with pleasure and yet older children and adults will not find them beneath them.

Understanding the Micro begins at the very simplest level by describing how to connect up a micro to a television and a tape recorder and goes on to describe the major parts of a micro and how they work, what micros are used for, what programming (in BASIC) looks like, and how to expand a simple microcomputer system. The section on programming is the weakest part of this book and two of the programs have errors that prevent them from working correctly. The book concludes with a buyer's guide to the major personal computers available, though several other good machines have come onto the market since this was written. This book gives a good idea of what is involved in using a micro, and so might well be consulted before buying one. A better educational practice, however, would be to use computers before trying to understand how they work.

Introduction to Computer Programming sets out to teach the programming language BASIC, the commonest programming language on small computers. It is an introduction to the elementary concepts rather than a full exposition of the language, and as such it succeeds very well. The versions of BASIC on different machines vary, so the author sticks to common ground where possible, pointing out the changes needed for widely available computers. This approach does mean that every user will have to do some translation in order to make the programs work on their machine. Users of BBC BASIC will find that the better features of this version, are ignored, and that they are better to learn techniques that they would have been better off without. Programming is taught through simple, example

programs, together with small program puzzles and suggestions for programs to write (solutions are provided). The examples include simple games, graphics, and a funny poem program. A very useful feature of the program listings is that notes are printed alongside the program outlining the purpose of each part and explaining how it works. The book includes a section on graphics, and a couple of pages on finding bugs (ie, errors) in programs.

Computer Spacegames and *Computer Battleships* each contain about a dozen simple games written in BASIC for the ZX81 together with detailed lists of amendments for various other machines (at least one of these listings contains misprints however). The games are all very simple and are variations on familiar themes. In each book there is one slightly more complicated game using some simple graphics and in this case the program for each machine is presented in full. The visual presentation of the books is very impressive with the result that the games are likely to come as something of a disappointment by comparison. These books are not intended to be treated simply as collections of games to be typed in, but rather as worked examples to copy and amend and thus learn from. The program listings are presented with the same kind of detailed notes as those in *Introduction to Computer Programming*, and a novice programmer will be able to learn a lot from studying them. Puzzles are presented to encourage exploration.

These books all teach BASIC because it is the standard language on micros today, but it does have its opponents: one prominent academic claims that it is almost impossible to teach good programming to students who have learnt to program in BASIC. There are alternative languages, one beginning to find favour in schools is LOGO and with this language elementary programming can become more academically respectable, more interesting and easier to learn.

Many children's first contact with computers is through games, and for these children the Osborne Guide to *Computer and Video Games* will make fascinating reading. There is a description of the major types of games machines, explanations of how they work, a history of computer games, forecasts of what is to come, and hints on how to play the more popular games, though games addicts will find few revelations here. The history of games goes back to the pioneer days of television games in 1972, and the invention of Space Invaders in 1978; really old people may actually remember these events.

The sudden explosion in sales of the microcomputer today happened to the calculator some years ago, yet few children understand how calculators work, or can use them correctly so *The Osborne Pocket Calculator Book* could be very useful. After describing the mechanics of a calculator the book runs over the purposes of the common keys giving a wide variety of questions and

puzzles that involve using a calculator. The questions are interestingly presented with lots of bright pictures but this section is little more than a cleverly disguised arithmetic text book. Later sections deal with trigonometry, statistics, and permutations but a one is likely to learn trigonometry, for example, from one page of a book however nicely illustrated. Many for whom the earlier sections are useful will have little use for these later sections, except perhaps as a demonstration that all these other funny keys on their calculators do have some purpose. This book would be most useful to those who have just begun to use a calculator seriously in their school work, say twelve year olds.

The final three books are aimed at a more general understanding of computers and their place in society. *Computers* covers the whole field of computing but its strength lies in its treatment of peripherals and applications, and these two areas are particularly well illustrated with photographs. The explanations are not very thorough, indeed many of them are simply commentaries on the illustrations around which the text is built, and the book has too many examples to copy and amend and thus learn from. The program listings are presented with the same kind of detailed notes as those in *Introduction to Computer Programming*, and a novice programmer will be able to learn a lot from studying them. Puzzles are presented to encourage exploration.

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some of the effects computers are having on society, and an excellent chapter on robots and intelligent machines. Problems discussed include crime, unemployment, computer development of computing and the military, but there is no discussion of the computer myth itself, the effect of computers on third world economies, the employment of women. This book is aimed at older students, fifteen or over, and besides its appeal to a general readership its treatment of social implications could well be recommended to students of Computer Science at O and A level, since this area is covered sketchily in the popular text books.

Appeals to you then this is for you.

Alone among the nine books reviewed *Microprocessors Today* is prepared to suggest that computers may not be a total blessing. After a thorough account of the history of computing and information processing, and a description of the present state of the technology and its applications there is a discussion of

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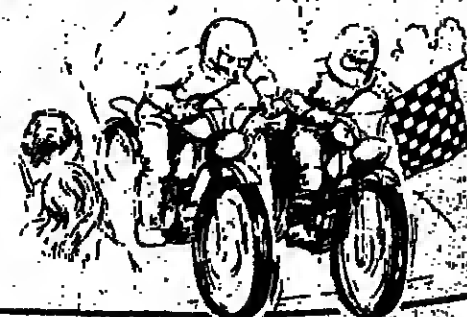
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commentary

Behind the lines

Robert Hewison

In the week when twenty youngish writers are launched on a two week promotional campaign as the "Best of Young British Novelists" it seems right to return to a question raised in "Behind the lines" a month ago, but overlooked in the heat of argument over the activities of the Arts Council Literature Department.

Michael Church's criticisms of the Arts Council's literature policy introduced a far broader issue: is it possible that the attention paid to fiction and poetry (in the balance of Arts Council policy, but also by extension in the "Young British Novelists") is disproportionate to the literary achievement of these genres? Does not the true excellence of contemporary British letters lie in biography, criticism, history and other forms of literature that are so aptly categorized as non-fiction?

At least one of the Young British Novelists appears to think so. A. N. Wilson has had some extremely derogatory remarks about his fellow writers reported in the February issue of *Hogwarts and Queen*. When I asked him about them he explained that the reporter who interviewed him had made them up, and he regretted their publication. But he does feel that contemporary non-fiction, rather than novels, will survive into the next century. "In a hundred years' time people might remember my life of Nelson, but I suspect that they will have forgotten my novels."

A. N. Wilson and his nineteen colleagues were their current marketing strategy was set to Michael Holroyd, who served on the selection committee. (He is also Vice-Chairman of the Arts Council Literature Panel). He is sympathetic to Michael Church's view. "To include historians or biographers or philosophers from the definition of literature would be to exclude Johnson, Gibbon, Carlyle... To a certain extent the division is an artificial one. Thomas Keneally's *Schindler's Ark*, for instance, won the Booker Prize for fiction. People understand what the category non-fiction is. Both Marx and Freud have shaped our perception of the world by appealing to the imagination."

Holroyd admits that as a non-fiction writer himself he may have a subconscious bias. He is concerned not to go to raise non-fiction above imaginative writing as to secure its cultural sobriety. Was it then the "picking order" that defined the non-fiction attitude? There is a rather poignant attitude, where history or biography are regarded simply as means of information retrieval. The notion that biography is simply an assemblage of facts is certainly not what I'm about.

The question of the relative value of the genres is more than a matter of literary prejudices. There is the real question of the amount of subsidy and promotion each receives - and the amount of critical attention they should be given by the press. Fiction writers have long complained that novels do not get the space they deserve in the review pages, whereas non-fiction is covered to excess. A. N. Wilson, who is also Literary Editor of the *Spectator*, disputes this. "I rarely come across a good novel that has been overlooked, whereas quite often a work of non-fiction can be. The amount of non-fiction that is rejected for review as opposed to fiction is far greater."

Chloe Tomalin, Literary Editor of *The Sunday Times*, rejects the suggestion that insufficient fiction is being reviewed. "We have been reviewing fiction very seriously indeed. This is a great return to fiction, while there has been a surge of over-production of biography. Fiction is much more, it is nearer to poetry and is likely to be more enduring."

This complacent to the status of poetry would please Alan Brownjohn, Chairman of the Poetry Society, but he is not outside a fairly narrow

literary circle poetry is not acknowledged either. "Poetry is the Cinderella as far as public attention is concerned, though everybody is writing poetry and putting it in drawers. It's a great hidden activity. The surface attitude of the media is either sneering or patronizing."

Alan Brownjohn feels that British poetry is going through a particularly creative period, and for that reason is worthy of support. Michael Holroyd points out that while such works as Richard Ellmann's biography of James Joyce create the impression that we have been experiencing "a golden age" of non-fiction literature, the economic tide is turning against the genre. Biographies and histories cost too much to produce, and do not have the prospect of appearing in paperback. Such protestations would probably not impress the Young British Novelists, of whom few, if any, can live by writing fiction alone. In passing, Michael Holroyd offered a note of reconciliation: "The reason I read so much fiction is in order to learn how to write biography; most novelists read non-fiction in order to be able to be better novelists."

Now that the natural injustice done to writers by a free library service has been at least nominally ended by the institution of Public Lending Right, writers and publishers have turned their attention to the actual injustice being done by the vast amounts of illegal photocopying carried out in educational establishments at every level, from primary school to university.

The Authors' Licensing and Copyright Society and the Publishers' Licensing Society have joined forces to set up the Copyright Licensing Agency Ltd. The Agency will offer licences to local authorities and educational establishments which will allow them to make multiple photocopies in exchange for a fee. This money will then be divided between the authors and the publishers of photocopied material.

There is no doubt that in law multiple photocopying is illegal, but it has become so much a feature of the educational economy (particularly with the cutbacks in book-buying) that it is difficult to see why the photocopyers should agree to buy voluntary licences from what is in fact a private company. None the less, the Copyright Licensing Agency has opened negotiations both with the representative organizations of the local authorities and with the

Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals.

Of the two groups, the universities seem the more reluctant. They do not concede that multiple photocopying goes on, and point out that the photocopying in their libraries is strictly controlled. The real problem, however, lies in the photocopying being done by individual departments. I asked the chairman of the ALCS, Maureen Duffy, how they hoped to get anywhere. "At the moment the law is being broken, and these people know it. We are therefore offering them a way of dealing with that. We know that a great deal of multiple photocopying is going on in university departments, and we have the evidence."

The implication is that if there is no progress it might be necessary to follow the example of the Music Publishers' Association, who have successfully prosecuted a public school and a local education authority for illegal photocopying. At the moment talks are still at an early stage, but the Copyright Licensing Agency hopes to have a scheme under way by the start of the next academic year. In the meantime, the intellectual property of thousands is being stolen every day.

...

Readers who are curious to discover whether American novelist Jerzy Kosinski really does exist (see "Behind the lines", July 16, 1982, and "American notes", December 10, 1982) will be able to see him in the flesh at International PEN's Writers' Day at the Purcell Room on March 10. Kosinski will be lecturing on "Self versus public: Controversy or Conviction". The title more than hints that he will be reflecting on the controversy stirred up by the *Village Voice*, which suggested, both that Kosinski did not write his own novels, and that the books he did write were subsidized by the CIA. The dispute has obscured his reputation as a dynamic President of American PEN.

The other lecturer is also familiar with controversy. D. M. Thomas will be speaking on "The Poet as Novelist". After lunch and the presentation of the Silver PEN Award and the J. R. Ackerley Prize for Autobiography, the lecturers will be joined for discussion with questions by Margherita Laski and the General Secretary of International PEN, A. Bloch. This (pen-name) Jean Bloch. This opportunity for audience participation replaces the "entertainment" of last year, but the choice of lecturers holds out hope for an entertaining afternoon. Tickets can be had from PEN, 7 Dilke Street, London SW3 4JB.

Author, Author

Competition No 111. Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office no later than March 15. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or falling that the most nearly correct - in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries, marked "Author, Author 111" on the envelope, should be addressed to The Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priority House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on March 25.

1 The floor was well-worn red brick, and on the wide bench burnt a fire of logs, between two attractive chimney corners tucked away in the wall, well out of any suspicion of draught. A couple of high-backed settles, facing each other on either side of the fire, gave further sitting accommodation for the sociably disposed. In the middle of the room stood a long table of plain boards placed on trestles, with benches down each side.

2 "Not but that it's a grand big place in a gloomy way... The house is six hundred years old, and it's on the edge of the moor, and there's near a hundred rooms in it, though most of them's shut up and locked. And there's

pictures and fine old furniture and things that's been there for ages... 3 They were just ordinary suburban children, and they lived with their Father and Mother in an ordinary red-brick-fronted villa, with coloured glass in the door, a tiled passage that was called a hall, a bath-room with hot and cold water, electric bells, french windows, and a good deal of white paint, and every modern convenience", as the house-agent says.

Competition No 107. Winner: Miss C. Easterbrook.

Answers: 1 Let's to billiards. Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, II, v. 2 Clash went the billiard balls in the Clerkenwell Social Saloon. John Bejeman, "Clash went the billiard balls".

3 The billiard sharp whom anyone catches. His doom's extremely hard: He's made to dwell In a prison cell. On a spot that's always barred; And there he plays extravagant matches.

In fifties finger-stalls. On a cloth untried. With a twist and a turn. And elliptical billiard balls! W. S. Gilbert, *The Mikado*, Act II.

Well read

Jonathan Keates

British Opera, 1876-1914
St John's Smith Square

Visiting the elephants' graveyards and Bermuda Triangles of music is a magnetically dismal experience, more especially in the case of nineteenth and early twentieth-century composers writing for large orchestras because of the sense of wasted energy conveyed by their scores. A concert devoted entirely to the world of late Victorian and Edwardian opera thus holds all the ghoulish fascination of Highgate Cemetery or the Vault of the Capuchins at Palermo.

They tried so very hard, did Arthur Goring Thomas and Frederiek Corder and Edward Naylor, and were sometimes nearly rather good at it, Sir Frederick Hymen Cowen was not quite so very good at it, and it seemed a pity that his "Dear Prince, thy ring shall ever be" from *Pastime* (1876), a forgettable morsel of pinchbeck operetta, should have been included when, for reasons not made clear, sections from *Ivanhoe*, Sullivan's 1890 attempt at the grand manner, were suddenly excised.

After hearing Quasimodo's aria "What would I do for my Queen" from Goring Thomas's *Emmevald* (1883) it was not hard to see why the composer himself ended in despondency and madness. If you go on pretending to be Gounod people who know you aren't will stop taking you seriously. Sir Alexander Mackenzie did the same thing much better in his raunchy *Colombia* prelude with which the concert began, one of very few pieces of any value.

Or, if you prefer, the aria "I am a man" from *Emmevald*, a naturalized written with a lively turn for virtuoso, whose Italian adaptation of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* was first given at Naples in 1906. Not one original idea in the whole Macanaglan farrago, of course, but a wickedly convincing impersonation, as was Edward Naylor's duet from *The Angler* (1909), a late Victorian pastiche of intangible tumescence.

D'Erlanger's choice of theme effectively highlights a major disaster area. The age turned everything into opera - Donizetti's *Pride and Prejudice*, Wagner's *Midsummer* and Offenbach's *Boule de Suif* may yet turn up - and the fatal good taste of English art made so many of these minor composers too timorously respectful of their texts to create the type of strong flexible vocal lines which Stanford needs to survive on. Stanford's version of *Much Ado About Nothing* (1901) is a mournful example of the way most British composers of the last hundred years have been too well read: far from doing a Bolto on Shakespeare, Stanford leaves him reverently apart, so that the play rambles on in an awkward autonomy above wedding-cake orchestral textures designed to recall that this is comedy. The genuine wit and grace of the composer's church music were, alas, nowhere recognizable.

Scarcely an accident, then, that the evening's two sterling originals should have provided their own librettos. It was good to hear a fragment of Delius's hitlerite subtexted *Irishman*, its rare winningly sensuous yet essentially hard-headed, and even better to catch the magnificent closing echoes of Holst's *Sio*, unjustly dismissed by its creator as "good old Wagnerian bawling" and validating all claims for him as a wizard of orchestral sonorities. These and the rest were played and sung, with more ardour than accuracy (an apparently "interesting" string line in Hamish MacCunn's *Jeannie Deans* was only a viola playing a semitone sharp) by the soloists and the orchestra. The admirable *Opera Viva*: The audience throughout the end it has to be said that the Corder and Naylor's and Cowen's of this world are forgotten not because they are English but because, simply, they are not terribly good.

A sanctuary above the smoke

David Bindman

SIMON JENKINS and JONATHAN DITCHBURN
Images of Hampstead
200pp, with 722 black-and-white illustrations. Arthur Ackermann Publishing Ltd, 1 St Helena Terrace, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 1NR. £67.50.
0 946186 02 2

One might expect a fully illustrated catalogue of prints of Hampstead from the seventeenth century to 1900 to contain many marvellous things, for the village has been associated with artists at least from the late eighteenth century. In fact, of the 530 prints reproduced here, the print collector, to whom this volume is principally directed, will find that very few have any artistic merit apart from their value as records. It was only in the nineteenth century that Hampstead became of particular interest to painters; before that, for the man of sensibility and the landscape painter, it was not much of a place. The boundaries of the old borough of Hampstead which this volume covers contained a group of small villages with really grand houses or parks, no features which

recalled the Roman Campagna, and no important ancient or historic ruins. The Heath was a desolate wilderness which would have held no charms at all. The one great house in the area, Keawood, which was the subject of a magnificent set of engraved views, lies outside the compass of this volume; presumably it has been reserved for a future volume of "Views of Highgate", though this has not been announced. Hampstead Church was undistinguished, Kilburn Priory the size of a small farmhouse, and even the larger houses were plain, reflecting the taste relaxation where the cream of society might feel secure in their place in the social order. In fact by the time the prints appeared in 1745 the Wells had gone into a fairly steep decline, largely it seems because of the danger from mugging on the road from London, which meant that the owners of the pleasure-grounds had to provide an armed escort to return the revellers safely home. The illusion that Hampstead Wells was still fashionable was becoming hard to sustain, and one wonders whether the Chateaux prints were not part of a promotional venture by the owner of the Wells themselves.

The only reason that anyone might choose to visit Hampstead rather than any other village near London was for the entertainments around Hampstead Wells, which had pretensions at the beginning of the eighteenth century to be the fashionable spa of the northern outskirts, but the vogue was short-lived, though it remained in existence until the middle of the century. The most accomplished eighteenth-century print of Hampstead, the engraved views by Chateaux of 1745, show it as a pleasant resort in which elegantly

dressed couples admire the view while friendly yet industrious farm labourers look on respectfully. The authors of this book seem to take the intentions behind these st face value, but recent writings on English eighteenth-century landscape painting have emphasized how tendentious and misleading such images of rustic content can be. Chateaux's Hampstead is the perfect exemplar of what David Solkin, in his introduction to the recent Richard Wilson exhibition at the Tate Gallery, calls the "Happy Rural Life", bedded in perpetual sunshine: heaven of civilized relaxation where the cream of society might feel secure in their place in the social order. In fact by the time the prints appeared in 1745 the Wells had gone into a fairly steep decline, largely it seems because of the danger from mugging on the road from London, which meant that the owners of the pleasure-grounds had to provide an armed escort to return the revellers safely home. The illusion that Hampstead Wells was still fashionable was becoming hard to sustain, and one wonders whether the Chateaux prints were not part of a promotional venture by the owner of the Wells themselves.

By the early nineteenth century Hampstead began to be distinctive almost by default as the inner suburbs of London gave way before the march of bricks and mortar. The Heath,

which had neither the orderliness nor the associations of an ancient past to appeal to eighteenth-century taste, now became admired for its open views and dramatic light, while authors like Kest and Leigh Hunt, and painters like Constable and Linnell, looked to Hampstead as a hilly refuge from the smoke of London. Constable hoped to "smoke a little of the country to my town life" and he was drawn in particular to the open sky over the Heath, which enabled him to realize most fully his idea of the sky as "the chief organ of sentiment" in a painting. Here the Hampstead print collector has the chance to acquire some of the Lucas mezzotints which reproduce Constable's Hampstead views, but for others from the same period he will have to content himself with the etchings of that untalented amateur Thomas Hastings and the occasional steel-engraving and lithograph, missing out John Linnell who made many fine drawings of Hampstead in the 1830s. Nineteenth-century Hampstead certainly attracted artists of quality but mainly those with a particular interest in the transient effects of weather and light on the Heath, which could only be captured by the bold use of oil-paint or watercolour; the regular grid of steel and commercial engraving was not sympathetic to the fleeting delights of Hampstead.

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As the land between London and Hampstead became more urbanized throughout the nineteenth century it ceased to be a country village in any real sense. It is only at this time that prints of picturesque corners of Hampstead begin to appear, steeped in nostalgia for its rural past. The picturesque Hampstead of today, though some of its buildings might be earlier, is mainly the creation of the late Victorian middle classes, who fought off the landowners trying to build more houses on the Heath, and kept public transport as far as possible outside their sanctuary. The way to interest himself in the street scene between place that Hampstead had become was Ford Madox Brown, who in the years 1851-2 stayed in Hampstead "one year & a few months" and produced a series of small, very hard up & a little mad. From this short period came the most famous Hampstead picture, "Work", a scene of "navvies" laying water-pipes in Heath Street and, lesser known but equally illuminating, "An English Autumn Afternoon" in a Birmingham City Art Gallery, which shows the view from Brown's house, the High Street across the Heath towards the smoke of the city. None of the few pictures of the late nineteenth century in England to attempt to depict suburban landscape as something special in itself, with new ideas of people living in it. The painting was never engraved and all the collectors who were able to possess it were Hampstead people. The work will be a indifferent wood-engraving made by "Work" later in the century.

The authors of *Images of Hampstead* might fairly claim that such questions are outside their brief, but considering their attention to prints in the book makes the volume of little more than a local interest. Still, it is enjoyable to see what remains from earlier times and to remind oneself that some of the nastier parts of the borough were rural beauty spots. The most affecting print must surely be the view of the newly built Finchley Road Station in 1860, which shows it entirely isolated among smiling fields, a headland of the immediate obliteration by brick and concrete. This would have been the fate of the whole borough, the fact included, if well-connected local people had not fought off the suburbanization. This is an intended book, with its subtitle "A collector's guide to the history of Victorian residential development in Hampstead", and it is a pity that it is not more fully illustrated with the photographs of the rural scene.

The collector of these matters will already be experiencing some sense of familiarity, for there is clearly a wealth of material in the air, and it is by considering his intellectual overhead that we can best discover what Lowe is up to. His first major debt, as the title suggests, is to Marx, who taught him to see society as a complex, multi-levelled totality undergoing transformation, and this, Lowe thinks, is still the best general framework we have for something he calls the "critical study of society". He recognizes, however, that grand structural accounts of society can find little place for human experience. Lowe therefore has recourse to phenomenology, which describes what is an intentional field and provides us with "a knowledge of how the inhabitants of a world approach it from the inside as an ongoing reality". The trouble with phenomenology, however, is that it has the reputation of being a doctrine of perception, and Lowe's intention is to provide us with "a knowledge of how the inhabitants of a world approach it from the inside as an ongoing reality". The trouble with phenomenology, however, is that it has the reputation of being a doctrine of perception, and Lowe's intention is to provide us with "a knowledge of how the inhabitants of a world approach it from the inside as an ongoing reality".

Robinson's remarks on Morris's life cover well-trodden ground and restrict themselves to his artistic projects. Far more pertinent are the reminders of his, and Burne-Jones's, long-standing enthusiasm for Chaucer: Burne-Jones had painted a wardrobe, designed by Morris, with scenes from the *Princess of Wales* as early as 1858; twelve embroidered hangings illustrating the *Legend of Good Women* had been planned for the Red House. Speaking of his poetry, Morris freely acknowledged "the resemblance of my work to Chaucer" that "comes of our both using the narrative method".

As one might expect, Burne-Jones's illustrations firmly favour the more chivalric and courtly elements in Chaucer. Bawdy is excluded; marginal notes to early sketches state "no picture to Miller's picture to Reeve's picture to Cook's Tale". Although his avowed attempt to see with Chaucer's eyes occasionally led him to some bizarre literal interpretations - the House of Fame, constructed of the same "twigs" as a panther might use, appears as a wicker cat-basket - Burne-Jones is generally ingenious in interpreting elusive imagery. The

SOCIAL STUDIES

Donal M. Lowe

History of Bourgeois Perception
200pp. Brighton: Harvester. £16.95.
0 7108 0383 4

The "perception" of Donal Lowe's title is not just what happens when we open our eyes. It is, rather, the way we are connected with the world. Construing perception thus, Professor Lowe finds that the determinants of perception are central to any human condition. He thinks that these can be analysed in to three crucial factors. The first is the way in which we communicate their perceptions: talking, writing, printing and the electronic media of the twentieth century constitute for him a succession of different cultures stretching back to the Middle Ages. There appears to be some progress in this sequence, but Lowe is wary of introducing ideological ideas like development, because development over time appears in his schema as one of the presuppositions of the "bourgeois society". Second, Lowe suggests that, at each stage, the hierarchy of each person's senses changes from what it had been. He admits that there are differences in seeing, by which, for example, blind people and musicians are often found with a dominantly rural perceptual awareness, but he believes that each medium of communication tends to determine its own special hierarchy. Thus in the photographic or handwritten culture of the Middle Ages, hearing and touching are said to have been more important than seeing. The coming of typography, by contrast, led to the dominance of vision.

Finally, Lowe invokes Foucault's notion that different cultures presuppose different epistemological conditions of understanding. We are "trapped in a brick wall" of the history of European experience since the Middle Ages can be ordered; the history of the world, which is admirable at least for its consistency, sets this history to work. The whole exercise is supplemented with illustrations and a methodological appendix.

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The Victorian tower-block

Kenneth Minogue

For different purposes, rather than general, all-purpose rooms. And the things people did with those rooms! The bourgeoisie has a compulsion to fill up the visible space of the home with excessive furnishing and intricate decoration. Possibly even worse than the clutter was the fact that the new invention of the family required an extreme polarization of sexual roles. Women had to conform to a role of submissive temperance, and men had to be active and hearty. In spite of this polarization, "a sentimentalized, asexual eroticism pervaded the invisible space of the home".

Altogether it makes one wonder how the Victorians managed to get through the Victorian age. Perhaps it is true that most people lead lives of quiet desperation, but this is a very strange account of a civilization with as much zest, energy and creative capacity as nineteenth-century Europe.

Things seem to have improved in the twentieth century, though we are all, it appears, the victims of the bureaucratic control of consumption. The element of bureaucracy seems to be tossed in for the sake of comprehensiveness, since the illustrations relevant to this point concentrate on the more familiar figure of the image-marketing advertiser. Lowe juxtaposes a 1939 advertisement recommending an Oldsmobile for its fluid transmission with a 1980 advertisement offering to build a "Tornado" for you. The pictures are titled "From use value to image value". The element of temporal sequence seems the least plausible, since Lowe could easily have found present-day advertisements concerned with useful properties like fuel-consumption. Equally, had he gone back in time, he would certainly have found the image being sold.

It is perhaps the useful destiny of these *Victorian tower-blocks* that, in living too high, they provoke the kind of historical criticism. Such criticism orodes these schemes by detailing the historical complexity of people in the past. It was easy enough to invent, any bourgeoisie, or slings of development on their way to somewhere or other, blocks of fundamentally similar people behaving

in fundamentally similar ways, on the basis of a picture of the Middle Ages (alias "feudalism") as populated entirely by nobles and peasants. The difficulty is not only that we know very well that it wasn't, but that such supposedly characteristic bourgeois behaviour as individualism and increasing being pushed by historians further back into the Middle Ages. The more that happens, the less plausible it becomes to slice history into stages of development. Again, the picture of us all today as puppets hobnobbing up and down on the strings of any advertiser who dangles an image before our eyes looks much less plausible as a characterization of our times now that we know in detail that the eighteenth century was no stranger to the art of selling the image rather than the object. Historicist excesses are perhaps best treated as suicidal conjectures which provoke historians to interesting refutations.

It does not, however, require historical criticism to reveal the weakness of Lowe's ambitious scheme. His argument fails because of the abstract character of the very idea of perception itself. If human culture is to be explained as a determination by frameworks of perception, then human beings can only appear as the victims of their imperfect frameworks. When Lowe tells us that, in the Middle Ages, "the order of anarchy restricted the rationality of the burghers", he is seeing them negatively, in terms of what came later. He is applying to them an abstract classification of a Weberian kind, rather than seeing them historically for what they actually were. Again, the Renaissance field of perception is said to have limited the economic rationality of the burghers of their time. Everyone is locked inside the prison of his own perception, right down to Frederick W. Taylor who, in the early twentieth century, was working on the "scientific management" of the factory.

What else can a history of frameworks be but a history of limitations? It is an impossible project because frameworks are abstract entities, and the historian needs real men and women to work with. Real men and women respond to real problems, and sometimes make

discoveries, and break through into something new. The way they think and the way they perceive things change in subtle and varied ways all the time, and the historical interest lies precisely in these subtleties. It is, no doubt, possible to rehearse all these complexities into intellectual tower-blocks with neat and distinguishable levels, and Lowe has followed Kubin in choosing this solution to the problem of how to combine a scheme with a history.

But such intellectual towers can only be inhabited by abstract people. Lowe's bourgeois Victorians are perhaps a shade more implausible than everybody else's stereotypes of the bourgeoisie, but the way he treats individual thinkers is hardly better. They are torn from the unity of slums of their actual intellectual context, and rehearsed in a single neat paragraph of potted summary. Edmund Burke is reported as believing that "Political wisdom... should take account of the spatio-temporal continuum." John Stuart Mill postulated a political space which "reflected the growing pain and adjustment of bourgeois society in the mid-nineteenth century". Next we discover that "an increasingly more harassed and conservative Alexis de Tocqueville had a more acute sense of the tension and limitation of political space in bourgeois society than did Mill." This incorporation of history's cast of thousands into Lowe's vocabulary end schema is sometimes quite adroitly done, but the adroitness cannot disguise the fact that Lowe shapes, patronizes and ultimately reduces to a nullity most of what he touches.

It is unfortunate that Lowe has chosen to cast what he has to say in the form of history. He certainly lists interesting things to say, and the very briskness and concision of the book is stimulating. It could have been a

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In close conjunction

Francis Sheppard

STEFAN MUTHESIUS
The English Terraced House
278pp with black-and-white and colour illustrations. Yale University Press. £12.50.
0 300 02871 7

It is surprising that nobody before has produced an overview of this large and obvious subject. There is plenty of published material to draw upon, and terrace (or terraced, as Stefan Muthesius calls them) houses of widely varying dates and sizes abound in every town throughout Britain. To the natives they are so much part of the everyday urban scene that they have not (except for the very grand ones) been thought of in terms of academic research; and the vision and detachment of someone who is not a native were required to draw our attention to just how important and how unusual this form of dwelling is.

We are told that at the beginning of this century the vast majority of English houses - perhaps around 90 per cent - "were built in one sort or way or another, houses of all sizes and at all price ranges". England thus lacked, "at least until the early twentieth century, the pattern of housing which we find in almost every other country... widely spaced, detached houses in the outer suburbs and in the countryside, contrasting with dense blocks of flats in the inner urban and suburban areas".

This English difference comes as something of a surprise, at any rate when stated with quite such uncompromising certainty, but Mr Muthesius is not very clear about the reason for it. In England, he writes, town walls had lost their importance by the sixteenth century, and there was therefore no need to squeeze a growing population into a very small area, as happened in many continental cities. Therefore the English suburb is a phenomenon of some antiquity, dating perhaps from as early as the sixteenth century, which has encouraged the desire to live away from work. The pattern of ownership of English houses was also unlike that of the rest of Europe: the owner-occupation of flats in terraced houses was (until recently) rare; and anyway there was no need to house the working classes in blocks of flats in a continental manner because very high densities could be achieved just as well with variations of the terraced house - up to 700 persons per acre in the back-to-backs of Liverpool, for instance. But perhaps the most important reason of all was the low cost of building land in England. Professor Donald Olsen has very recently stated that after the price of undeveloped building land on the outskirts of

English towns had roughly tripled between 1740 and 1820, it fell by a third during the great crash of 1825, and (with only minor fluctuations) remained at that low level until at least 1939; and Olsen explicitly states that "the abundance of cheap land on the outskirts of all English towns encouraged the low-density development that came to distinguish English urban growth from that prevalent practically everywhere else in Europe."

Muthesius makes the same point, though not quite so emphatically. In England, he tells us, the cost of the land was normally only about 10 to 20 per cent of the total building costs, whereas for a typical big Berlin block of flats it would amount to one-third or even two-thirds, which made five or more storeys inevitable. The construction costs of these great blocks were also much higher than those of ordinary English houses, which, because of the limited life-expectancy imposed by the term of the lease, were relatively lightly built. In England too, practically all houses were built speculatively - built without a client in mind, in the hope that the house would sell for the best price as soon as it was finished. This was not the case on the continent until around the second half of the nineteenth century; and because speculators have to limit their options in order to reduce uncertainties, speculative building tends to be conservative - hence the durability of the English terraced house as a type.

The reasons for English peculiarities in housing tradition clearly need more research, and perhaps Olsen will have something to say about the matter in his forthcoming comparative study of London, Paris and Vienna. But if Muthesius is a little uncertain here - "The explanation of this phenomenon is extremely difficult", he candidly admits - he has found all the answers to everything else. The method, management and control of English speculative building are first described, followed by the planning, servicing, facade and detailed decoration of the terraced house. Other matters discussed include the way that changes in domestic life brought changes of plan; the influence of new styles and technological developments on the use of common building materials; distinctions between sizes and types of house in the context of the social stratification of Victorian society; and the eventual demise of the terrace as the most fashionable place to live by the end of the nineteenth century.

Muthesius's researches have taken him all over the country from Plymouth to Preston and from Ramsgate to Tyneside, as well as, of course, to London. His 250 illustrations, over thirty of them in colour, include site plans, house plans,

sections and elevations as well as photographs; and the subjects, varying from the miners' cottages of Northumberland to the palatial ranges of Brighton or Cheltenham, demonstrate the great variety and adaptability of the terraced house. With all its advantages, it seems extraordinary that this type does not prevail elsewhere in the western world; and still more extraordinary that any city-dweller should actually prefer to live in a detached house. Such, however, has been the case throughout much of the present century, as the outskirts of practically every town in England show - though in recent years there have been welcome signs of a partial reaction in favour of the terrace.

Two minor criticisms of a fine book may perhaps be permitted. The illustrations are, of course, interspersed throughout the text in the usual contemporary way, but in two separate numerical sequences, one for the coloured pictures and the other for the black and white. This involves a

Pictorial pilgrims

Kate Flint

DUNCAN ROBINSON

William Morris, Edward Burne-Jones and the Kelmscott Chaucer
116pp, Gordon Fraser. £25.
0 86092 038 0

The Kelmscott Chaucer, claimed Burne-Jones, was to be "a little like a pocket cathedral". As with the Gothic in Ruskin's interpretation, each carefully wrought part had a role to play in the structured whole. Duncan Robinson's short introduction and choice of illustrations in *William Morris, Edward Burne-Jones and the Kelmscott Chaucer* are chiefly valuable for their dismantling of the richly finished edifice to show the processes which went into its making.

A careful, though non-technical account is given of Morris's choice of ink, paper and vellum, and of his designing the Troy typeface, modelled on early German printers. The progress of Burne-Jones's eighty-seven illustrations is traced, from preliminary sketch to detailed drawing to their laborious transference, by means of photography, reworking, and rephotography, on to the wood block. The collaborators saw theirs as a purely aesthetic, not a scholarly, enterprise. The text - if it were ever exhausted from reading from the florid margins - was to be left to speak for itself. Burne-

Jones, giving his first copy to his daughter, in June 1896, inscribed it proudly: "I want particularly to draw your attention to the fact that there is no preface to Chaucer, no introduction, and no essay on his position as a poet, and no notes, and no glossary, so that all is prepared for you to enjoy him thoroughly."

Robinson's remarks on Morris's life cover well-trodden ground and restrict themselves to his artistic projects. Far more pertinent are the reminders of his, and Burne-Jones's, long-standing enthusiasm for Chaucer: Burne-Jones had painted a wardrobe, designed by Morris, with scenes from the *Princess of Wales* as early as 1858; twelve embroidered hangings illustrating the *Legend of Good Women* had been planned for the Red House. Speaking of his poetry, Morris freely acknowledged "the resemblance of my work to Chaucer" that "comes of our both using the narrative method".

As one might expect, Burne-Jones's illustrations firmly favour the more chivalric and courtly elements in Chaucer. Bawdy is excluded; marginal notes to early sketches state "no picture to Miller's picture to Reeve's picture to Cook's Tale". Although his avowed attempt to see with Chaucer's eyes occasionally led him to some bizarre literal interpretations - the House of Fame, constructed of the same "twigs" as a panther might use, appears as a wicker cat-basket - Burne-Jones is generally ingenious in interpreting elusive imagery. The

statue of Venus, "fietynge in the sea", which Emily, wife of the Knight's Tale, is slotted through watery spheres, a liquid equivalent to the *round*. His studies of the Renaissance painting, "The Descent into Hell", which is a study of the human condition, and the grand structural accounts of society can find little place for human experience. Lowe therefore has recourse to phenomenology, which describes what is an intentional field and provides us with "a knowledge of how the inhabitants of a world approach it from the inside as an ongoing reality". The trouble with phenomenology, however, is that it has the reputation of being a doctrine of perception, and Lowe's intention is to provide us with "a knowledge of how the inhabitants of a world approach it from the inside as an ongoing reality".

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The collector of these matters will already be experiencing some sense of familiarity, for there is clearly a wealth of material in the air, and it is by considering his intellectual overhead that we can best discover what Lowe is up to. His first major debt, as the title suggests, is to Marx, who taught him to see society as a complex, multi-levelled totality undergoing transformation, and this, Lowe thinks, is still the best general framework we have for something he calls the "critical study of society". He recognizes, however, that grand structural accounts of society can find little place for human experience. Lowe therefore has recourse to phenomenology, which describes what is an intentional field and provides us with "a knowledge of how the inhabitants of a world approach it from the inside as an ongoing reality". The trouble with phenomenology, however, is that it has the reputation of being a doctrine of perception, and Lowe's intention is to provide us with "a knowledge of how the inhabitants of a world approach it from the inside as an ongoing reality".

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The benefit basement

David Donnison

WILFRED BECKERMAN and STEPHEN CLARK
Poverty and Social Security in Britain since 1961
94pp, Oxford University Press.
£7.95.
0 19 829004 7

Peter Townsend's 1200-page book on *Poverty in the United Kingdom*, published in 1979, took the tradition of broad-based poverty surveys about as far as it could go - inquiring into income, expenditure and "quality" of housing, working conditions and the environment; diets, health and education; feelings, family relationships and social philosophies.

Wilfred Beckerman and Stephen Clark, who do not even mention Townsend or his distinguished predecessors, represent a new tradition. In seventy-five pages, plus technical appendices, they ask very specific, numerical questions: How many people get less than a supplementary benefit income before receiving benefits, and after? How much would it cost to lift the poor out of poverty, thus defined? How efficiently do various benefits achieve that? How did these things change between 1961 and 1978? Their answers will become an essential part of the knowledge required by anyone who wants to contribute to the increasingly heated debate about policies for redistributing and maintaining incomes in Britain.

When counted as households, pensioners were, in the mid-1970s, the largest group living below

supplementary benefit levels. But when counted as individual persons, the poor non-pensioners and their families were more numerous. (By now, rising unemployment means that the non-pensioner poor will have grown more numerous still.) The extent of poverty was most severe for lone parents and for couples with one or two children. (Those figures will have gone up too: the unemployed and low-paid workers with children have borne the brunt of the economic disasters and the cuts in benefits which have occurred since the mid-1970s.) The poverty of these younger families could be explained, mainly by low earnings, due largely to low hourly rates of pay, and to a lesser extent to low proportions of earners in the household and short working hours. The "efficiency" of benefits in lifting people out of poverty - defined as the proportion of expenditure on benefits which is devoted to raising people to a supplementary benefit level of income - has always been higher in Britain than in most countries. It has been getting higher still as we rely increasingly on means-tested benefits.

The strength of this approach - abandoning Townsend's broad horizons for an economist's microscope questions which can be answered, its weakness arises from the fact that the microscope falls to encompass most of the issues which pre-occupy politicians have to deal with. Beckerman and Clark themselves point out many of these limitations, but those who use their results will be less meticulous.

Abandoning the inverted commas

used in their book, the hatchet-men will attack child benefits, family income supplements and housing subsidies as "inefficient" devices for reducing poverty, distracting us from the fact that it is politically impossible to raise the incomes of unemployed families - the poorest people of all - unless we first do something for the working poor who earn little more. Family benefits and housing subsidies are often the best way of doing that. We shall be told that most of the unemployed are in deep or prolonged poverty, but not reminded that "poverty" has been defined by the specially low supplementary benefit rates we give to people out of work; not the higher rates paid to pensioners and other claimants; let alone the average incomes of workers. (Thus we hold down "poverty", statistically speaking, not by raising benefits but by keeping them low.) By talking about "poverty gaps" and the "efficiency" of benefits Treasury men will distract our attention from "wealth gaps" and the "efficiency of taxation". The reason why social insurance does not reduce poverty very efficiently is because earnings are so unequally distributed and the burden of insurance contributions rests too heavily on the low paid and too lightly on the rich. Thus to enlarge this kind of social insurance scheme calls for higher contributions which make a lot of people poorer. But such questions cannot be addressed with the methods of this book.

It is excellent to see first-class economists moving into the field of poverty studies, which most of their colleagues have for so long neglected. I hope they will soon help us to explore larger questions.

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Capital on the move

Sidney Pollard

MICHAEL EDLSTEIN

Overseas Investment in the Age of High Imperialism: The United Kingdom, 1850-1914

367pp. Methuen. £22.50.
0 416 34730 4

The search for the causes of post-war British economic failure continues as avidly as ever, and among these causes the slowing-down of the late Victorian economy figures prominently: nor does the flood of literature on British imperialism show any signs of abating. Both topics meet in the theme of this book: British overseas investment between 1850 and 1914. For among the mainstays of imperialism, as seen by J. A. Hobson, by Lenin and by their numerous followers, was the need to seek investment abroad, since the home markets for capital were drying up; and among the most frequently discussed causes for the alleged failure of the Victorian economy was the shunting of capital abroad, to the detriment of investment in new methods and new industries at home. The researcher with all the recent material and the latest economic techniques at his disposal is therefore faced with two diametrically opposed doctrines: a Britain pining for capital which is being drained abroad by a misguided capital market and irrational investors; or a Britain suffering from a glut of capital, which only investment abroad can relieve.

How to decide among these two extremes? The problem is harder to solve than would appear at first sight, for there are enormous difficulties of definition, of simultaneous cause-and-effect relationships, and even of a possible co-existence of capital shortages and surpluses - in different markets or of different types of capital. Full agreement cannot even be expected on the question of how to

calculate a rate of return on capital invested. Also, as we know from other discussions of this kind, it is not at all easy to distinguish pull-and-push initiatives when capital moves across frontiers. Finally, as is normal in economic history, the data are incomplete and have to be filled in with guesswork, proxies and interpolations.

The difficulties start with the sums involved. There is no doubt that Britain was by far the largest foreign investor in that period, that there is no other example in history of a country investing so large a part of its national income abroad or drawing, by the end of the period, such a large part of its income from foreign investments; and it is also agreed that the rate of foreign investment accelerated rapidly in the last years of peace. But the absolute figures are in dispute since D.C.M. Platt has pointed out the inconsistencies and exaggerations in the statistics that have been universally used for almost seventy years.

Unfortunately, Michael Edlstein's book has come out too soon for these doubts to be taken into account, but they point up one weakness of the economic approach which dominates this volume: the unavailability of the initial series, and the danger of building on their numerical constructs that frequently go down to two decimal places. Other typical weaknesses are the tendency to neglect the quantities not explained by the variables used; the tendency to assume that whatever "explains" fluctuations must also explain the underlying drive or trend; and the tendency to assume that numerical correlations must necessarily reflect direct causal relations. Fortunately, the author is too good an economist and a historian, and he knows his subject, on which he has worked for many years, too well, to fall into these traps. He uses his numerous attempts at correlations only as a test for propositions arrived at independently, and interprets them with caution and understanding; one would wish to see these qualities

applied more often in the literature.

Edlstein's model is based on a market which brings together desired savings and desired investments. The former are assumed to be related to the age structure of a population, to the income distribution among factors, and to rates of return. Short-term fluctuations in desired savings are related to changes in incomes, wealth and rates of return. Desired investments are divided into two groups, housing investment, related to population changes, and investment in agriculture and industry, related to the growth in productivity and the relative prices of capital equipment. Plausible as these assumptions are, it will be evident that they are macro-quantities and cannot deal with the differences between sectors or industries, which clearly played a key role in such issues as the alleged deprivation of certain British industries of capital because of the organization of the London and provincial capital markets. The model is also intended to incorporate changes within the period, such as the fall in birth-rates and technical innovation, and it deals with investment of British capital at home, in the US, Canada, Australia and occasionally, Argentina.

In the event, if the numerous calculations performed here are to be believed, none of the extreme positions taken up on these questions survives close examination. There appeared to be no incisive shortage of capital in the UK to hold up desirable projects; even after risk factors have been eliminated (by a somewhat dubious procedure), return on foreign investment was higher than on British when like is compared with like, which points to the absence of an overwhelming unmet desire for capital at home. It should be stressed, however, that these results are based on averages, which hide many extreme cases of individual firms; that the calculations are made on Stock Exchange asset values, and not on historical quantities invested, which would be the appropriate measure to

answer the question whether investments were channelled in the right direction; and that companies which had failed were excluded from the sample. Nor does the opposite view, of a capital glut, get more than very limited support: over much of the period, and in several of the markets analysed, there was no sign of over-saving in Britain, though in the last two decades, and in some markets, especially the US, there were strong indications of a "push" out of Britain rather than a pull of opportunities abroad.

The ethical wing

Donald Winch

ALON KADISH

The Oxford Economists in the Late Nineteenth Century
312pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
£19.50.
0 19 821886 9

This study in "collective social and intellectual biography" belongs to a genre to which there have been two related contributions in recent years. Christopher Harvie's *The Lights of Liberalism* and Christopher Kent's *Brains and Numbers*. What these studies have in common is a concern to trace the careers of groups of late nineteenth-century intellectuals from their Oxford and Cambridge beginnings to maturity. In this case Alon Kadish deals with a group of Oxford men, often sharing a lower-middle-class background and radical liberal enthusiasms, whose active lives were mostly spent in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first decade or so of the twentieth. Among the better-known members of his cast were W. J. Ashley, Edwin Cannan, L. L. Price, W. A. S. Hewins, and H. Llewellyn Smith; and the formative influences on them at Oxford were the teachings and example of Arnold Toynbee, T. H. Green, and to a lesser extent, J. E. Thorold Rogers. They are rightly described as economists despite the fact that none of them made any significant contribution to the discipline now known as economics.

The Oxford economists were, in varying degrees, committed to the development of a more explicitly ethical and historical alternative to the orthodox theoretical approach to classical political economy associated with the names of David Ricardo and John Stuart Mill; and they increasingly found themselves in conflict with the new "organon" of economic knowledge being constructed by Alfred Marshall from his secure base in Cambridge. The inability of the Oxford group either to find a leader of Marshall's stature or to capture an equivalent intellectual or institutional base of their own is an important part of Kadish's story. For, despite obtaining support for some aspects of their campaign against theoretical economics from two Cambridge men, William Cunningham and W. S. Foxwell, the ethico-evolutionary approach made little permanent inroad on the orthodox version of the subject in Britain beyond those points which Marshall and his followers - chiefly, in methodological matters at least, J. M. Keynes - were already prepared to concede. Indeed, concession seems the wrong word to describe something to which Marshall in particular laid personal claim, namely a persistent ethical purpose and a preoccupation with social evolution.

Economists have a strong preference for histories of their discipline that concentrate on success, and this has meant that little room is normally accorded in the standard histories to the losers in the long-running feud between historians and theorists for the soul of economics. If the historical critics are granted an honourable mention in despatches, the honour awarded is usually only a consolation prize in the form of credit for founding a neighbouring academic enterprise called economic history - an enterprise with which economists have no quarrel as long as it does not seek, as it patently did in the nineteenth century, to usurp their claims to knowledge.

This apart, this is a book to be warmly commended, both for its interesting reading and for reference. I know of no better treatment of its fascinating theme.

The scholarship, and the balance of this study, are impressive. The author has a flair for backing a clear view through complex issues and for giving each of theory, of economics, of common sense, their due. Within a tiny space, the work is a model of its kind. It is a pity that in the nature of things it has to deal in national aggregates and averages on questions in which numerous individual decisions of form, grouped at least by sector and region.

But while this describes the outcome, one of the merits of Kadish's biographical approach is that it enables him to deal with the complexities of the process by which this result came about. By focusing on the careers of the protagonists, rather than simply on the methodological banners under which they occasionally rallied, he captures internal features of the club of intellectual styles involved in a dispute which escape the methodological and political labels applied from the outside. It also enables Kadish to recognize what was often sham passages of arms, as well as the intriguing cases of desertion and role-reversal.

Another merit of Kadish's approach is that he deals fully with the institutional side of the dispute, and in this respect the title of his book is perhaps too narrow if it suggests concentration on Oxford alone. The dispute was as much enmeshed with the history of economics at Cambridge as at Oxford, and it also permeated the early history of the London School of Economics. Indeed, it was at the LSE, where, partly by design, partly by permission, many of the leading opponents of what by then had become Marshallian orthodoxy. For some dissenting economists, permanent appointments at the LSE were served to compensate for their exclusion elsewhere, at Oxford or Cambridge, and in the failure of Extension movement to furnish an academic platform they had hoped to carry. Although the struggle for academic *Lebensraum* involved complex prospects, it was never simply an exercise in chicanery. Academic careers and security were sought by both sides as means of achieving larger goals.

Kadish is scrupulously even-handed in his treatment of the dispute, and avoids the temptation to depict his protagonists as the losers because they lost. He attempts to diminish Marshall's genuine achievements, and suggests that we would be wiser to try to historicize political economy and vanquish the harder-nosed world of economics. In any event, what is by no means clear that either side to the dispute would have appeared to the modern shape of the discipline, such speculations are really beside the point. It is perhaps a sign of the continuing backwardness of the historiography of economics that a young Israeli scholar, with no pre-commitment to the history of economics as usually practised, should have produced such a balanced account of this absorbing story, and of excellent use of primary sources, which have long been available.

The Proceedings of the Society for the Advancement of Science, the title of *Beyond Economics* (217pp. Macmillan, £19.95, 333 32668 7). The eleven contributions to the volume include: that of the editor, Jack Wieman, on "Dreadful Reality"; that of Stephen Leacock, on "Subjectivism and the 'Actual' Economics"; that of Terence Cooney, on "Knowledge, Learning, Enterprise"; and Terence Cooney, on "From 'Dismal Science' to 'Progress'".

Medieval Literature

Endlessly proliferating

Heather O'Donoghue

CAROL J. CLOVER

The Medieval Saga
210pp. Cornell University Press. £14.
£30.1447 4

Icelandic sagas used to be regarded as pre-medieval creations, as oral stories copied up in the Middle Ages. But for some time now, scholars have argued for the medieval origins of these works - hence Carol J. Clover's title *The Medieval Saga*. Ms Clover goes one step further in arguing that the Icelandic sagas, as literary compositions, bear direct comparison with some of the major narrative works of contemporary France, and that "as formal constructions they are not separate from the larger European development of the thirteenth century, but part of it".

Behind Clover's argument lie two quite different critical works: T. M. Andersson's *The Icelandic Family Saga* and Eugene Vinaver's *The Rise of Romance*. Andersson's book claims that family sagas are built on the simple old pattern of intrusion, conflict, climax, revenge, reconciliation and aftermath. It is a thoroughly over-reductive structural analysis of saga narrative. Vinaver's *Rise of Romance* has been justly celebrated, but *The Rise of Romance* takes as its subject medieval French and English chivalric romances whose content, in terms of *matière* at least, bears resemblance whatever to that of the bulk of the Icelandic sagas. Throughout *The Medieval Saga*, Ms Clover is at pains to show that the sagas are to be regarded as a distinct literary genre, and that they are to be compared in spite of tremendous differences in theme and content.

Clover sees the sagas as units of "story", oral scenes which are joined together in infinitely flexible structures determined by what she terms "the mechanics of proliferation", that is, the enmeshing, or "braiding", of threads of narrative. Further, she argues that each individual saga has a "tendency to interlink with other sagas" to create one vast cyclic whole. There are problems with all these contentions. To begin with, the question of what is saga is very vexed one, and there is really no way of distinguishing one from the other. The question is certainly too complex to be dealt with in passing - in fact, the blend of popular tradition and literary creation may have reached such a stage in the sagas as we now have them that we shall never be able to distinguish the two.

More controversial is Clover's picture of a saga narrative as endlessly extendable and arbitrarily delimited - she speaks of a narrative "lacking actual borders" and "capable of infinite regression into impinging matter". Such a view is the almost inevitable result of analysing structure without due regard to thematic content. Andersson did exactly the same: he remarked of *Laxdœla saga* that "one loses nothing by skipping a page here and there" from the truth could be further from the truth. Clover, for example, takes the story of the doomed marriage between Unnr and Hrútr, with which *Njáls saga* opens, to be a "prefatory sub-plot", considerably overdeveloped in proportion to its actual function. Yet she admits to the episode's "proleptic value in the question of 'marriage'". Had she viewed *Njáls saga* as saving the exploration of the effects of sexual jealousy as one of its major themes - as Trause Dröke does in her recent *Dorthea Coko Memorial Lecture* - the "actual function" of the story would of course have seemed different. Clover notes that in this book that structure is "in the eye of the beholder, but mostly to be used to meet its implications". The account of the formidable marriage of Unnr and Hrútr (the deep-minded) with which *Laxdœla saga* opens is not there, as Clover says, "as Clover would have it, *Laxdœla saga* is the

characterized by fiercely strong-minded women, of whom this remarkable character is the first. Finally, to say that the savage feuding between Hallgrdr and Berghora in *Njáls saga* "does not have any direct consequences on the plot" is wrong, however "plot" or "direct consequences" are defined. Clover suggests that this is "the sort of material modern plot summaries are likely to bracket or omit altogether as irrelevant to the story" - though not even Andersson goes so far. She recognizes that a rigorously neo-classical approach which might bracket or omit such material would be too extreme, but rejects such an approach on the questionable grounds that it is a feature of saga narrative to include episodes which loosely proliferate from the central matter. There are, of course, "digressions" in the sagas, but whether they are a characteristic feature of good sagas is another matter.

Clover's third point, about interrelationships between different sagas, touches on a major flaw in her critical procedure. She is not concerned to distinguish between different genres of saga writing, between different kinds of saga. Perhaps the problem arises from the over-inclusiveness of the word "saga". Some works are indeed compositions - *Flneyrnbrók*, for example - and will

bear structural comparison with other synthetic works such as Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*. But the family sagas, the so-called "classical period" are not in the least like compilations: their boundaries, thematic and structural, are the result of conscious selection and authorial control. There are also vital distinctions to be made within the subgroup "family sagas". *Egils saga* is biographical in form, and this obviously has a bearing on the shape and extent of its narrative; *Eyrbyggja saga*, on the other hand, takes as its subject not one man's life but the settling of a whole district. It was precisely because Andersson tried to fit *Eyrbyggja saga* into a standard structural pattern that he ended up calling it "troublesome and amorphous", just as Clover sees it as lying far from "any discernible principal of structural unity".

Vinaver's theory of intertextuality rests on the belief that in the Middle Ages, writers began to attempt simultaneous narrative, but, since, unlike polyphony, two narratives cannot actually run at the same time, techniques of narrative intertextuality developed. Clover is quite right to point to the running together of two or more narratives as one of the most striking features of the family sagas. These sagas take as their subject-matter families or communities and the relationship between individuals

within these groups. They thus attempt a breadth of subject-matter which requires a "multiply" narrative technique. In a sense, therefore, content determines form. But Clover points to the opening of *Njáls saga* as evidence of the author's "baroque propensities" because the reader is first introduced to the bride-to-be, Unnr, then to Hrútr and his half-brother Hoskuldur, only to be returned to Unnr when Hoskuldur proposes that Hrútr should marry her. Clover sees this as intertextuality at its own best, implying a decorative function. To draw attention to this extraordinary method of telling a story is extremely important, but the method need not be viewed as a formal *jeu d'esprit*. In conventional narrative, it would indeed be natural to introduce characters as they play a part in the story, but family sagas, in trying to reconcile simultaneous narratives with natural chronological flow, sometimes introduce characters before they act. Unnr does not come into existence because Hrútr wants to marry her; she is already present, in the fictional narrative as she would be in the real world.

Clover is generally good in her analysis of simultaneous narrative in saga writing; she points out very clearly how this "advance warning" technique can result in a finely uncluttered narrative climax - as in the burning of Njáll, when the loyalties, motives,

reservations and ambitions of the burners are already lodged in the reader's mind as the event approaches. Illuminating work like this on the literary techniques of saga narrative is extremely welcome.

Clover's conclusion is more moderate than the publisher's blurb may lead one to expect. She argues that that saga writers used Continental models (though noting wistfully: "material evidence of this is hard to come by") but that "the saga and the prose romances represent... independent responses to a common medieval aesthetic". Perhaps the book would have been even more persuasive had Clover not tried to deal with so many different kinds of saga - indeed with so much material in general. She considers briefly intertextuality in ninth and tenth-century skaldic verse, and Viking art, but leaves us with the perfunctory precept to regard these techniques as "anticipatory". Towards the end of the book, she proposes a chronological order for historical and family sagas based on the degree of sophistication shown in intertextuality techniques. Such subjects are clearly whole books in themselves. In fact, the comparison Ms Clover tries to draw between French interlarded narratives and almost any saga one might care to mention could have filled a book twice this size had the Icelandic element been confined to *Njáls saga* alone.

Education of a knight

Arthur Terry

CURIAL AND GUELLA

Translated by Pamela Walcy
287pp. Allen and Unwin. £9.95.
0 04 823217 3

The original of *Curial and Gueffa* is an anonymous chivalric romance written in Catalan sometime between 1440 and 1460 by an author familiar with the topography of northern Italy and Burgundy. As the translator explains, in her lucid though all too brief introduction, part of the interest of the book lies in its attempt to give a historical dimension to attitudes and modes of behaviour which clearly belong to the author's own time. The action is set at a specific point in history: the reign of King Peter the Great of Aragon (1276-89), whose presence as an actual character accounts for some of the most vivid passages of the book. And in the course of the narrative, this strong "Catalan interest" is played off against

the fortunes of the chief protagonist, Curial, whose education, which begins and ends in Italy, provides the main theme of the story.

The preface makes it clear that Curial is to become an exceptional lover, as well as an outstanding knight, and the strategy employed by Gueffa,

to make his pathless, all too human possibilities: "My intention is to make him a man, but I do not intend to give him my love but rather to make him worthy and valiant by giving him to understand that I love him." In personal terms, therefore, the purpose of Curial's education is to make him worthy of Gueffa, whom he eventually marries. Obstacles, inevitably, intervene: Curial's undisciplined origins lay him open to the hostility of some of the more snobbish characters; he himself is emotionally insecure, and his triumphant foils of arms are punctuated by his shifting relationship with the symbolically named Lechesia, the daughter of the Duke of Bavaria, and by the intermittent anger of Gueffa, at what she takes to be his infidelity.

Call

The shipwright's beauty, who butchers the forest,
Dresses it again in shining sails,

Garnments like blossom,

And sailed with new iron like budding grain,
With big ship-bosses full of wonderful fruit
And men of unbelievable expertise
Of knowledge of the stars and winds;

You serve branching ocean routes
As though the whole sea were a sailing-tree
And the ships were blossom on it
Gilding slowly.

On its world-embracing boughs
Transferring goodness and prosperity;

You give then, yare names:
Tidesource, Ocean Moon:
And their travellers a berth of womb
In the big-belly blown along
By hindling blossom;

And others dig
And uncover the scarlet iron
And with fire you forge bells and sounding hells
And the great runes of iron leather on the waters
The heaviest stone sails the wide seas
Or in the dusty dry dock
Resounds to its making
As a cathedral call out to its glad city to serve.

Peter Redgrove

Changes on the permanent way

Sherwin Bailey

G. FREEMAN ALLEN

Railways: Past, Present and Future
304pp. Orbis. £12.50.
0 85613 322 1

The Industrial Revolution in Britain, and the consequent expansion of manufacture and trade, soon showed, both the waterways (navigable rivers and canals) and roads to be obsolete means of the economical bulk conveyance of minerals and goods. It was the development and application of steam power to the haulage of large loads along tracks evolved from the primitive industrial playways that made possible a service that neither waterways nor roads could provide. The Stockton and Darlington line (1825) became the first steam-hauled public railway, soon to be followed by the Liverpool and Manchester line. The Rainhill trials organized by the directorate of the latter established the capacity and general principles of design of the steam locomotive. During the decades following many lines were promoted throughout Britain for the haulage of traffic by steam power. Gangs of navvies transformed the appearance of the countryside by constructing cuttings, embankments and viaducts, and to maintain even gradients pierced obstructing hills by tunnels; so the shape of a railway system began to emerge. After much contention a standard gauge was fixed, and a network of lines connected the country's centres of industry and population. The new railways survived the financial crises resulting from the speculation and ambition of entrepreneurs such as George Hudson, while Parliament, whose sanction was required for every proposed venture, kept a watchful eye upon developments, concerned mainly to protect public and private interests, to ensure safety and to prevent monopolies. As time went on, travellers demanded greater speed,

comfort and convenience. Coaches became more and more comfortable, for all but the third class of passenger, and facilities on the trains and stations increased. Engineers developed the capacities of the locomotive, and improved methods of track maintenance and signalling contributed to the faster and safer running of the trains.

By the closing years of the nineteenth century, which saw the emergence of England's last railway, the Great Central, the steam railway had established itself in North America, on the continent of Europe, and to the East, and some notable engineering feats had been achieved, though later were to come the great tunnels and viaducts of Switzerland. In the United States of America standards of comfort and even luxury were attained which served as a model for other countries. In the twentieth century locomotive development proceeded apace under engineers of genius such as Churchward, Gresley and Stanier in Britain, Chapeton in France, and Wagner in Germany, and some remarkably high speeds were attained. Mallard's 126 mph reached on the LNER stands as a record for a steam engine.

By 1900 it might have seemed that the position of the steam railway as a general carrier was assured. But the devastation caused by two world wars, and the economic depression following them, and above all the development of the internal combustion engine challenged their dominance. The petrol-driven truck and the aeroplane posed a threat to short-haul rail traffic and to the inter-city main line traffic. The diesel, and later the electric, locomotive gradually replaced the steam engine, the potential of which had not been fully explored when it became obsolete. In Britain the obligations of the railway as a common carrier weakened its competitiveness, and the legacy of the great railway age - the proliferation of routes resulting from competition for traffic and from Parliament's fear of monopolies, the restrictive loading gauge, and the cost

of maintaining the infrastructure - impeded adaptation to new conditions of operation. In other countries the state's involvement with the railways from their beginnings made adaptation easier, but everywhere a new conception of the role of the railway had to be evolved. Unprofitable lines have been closed, less so in countries where state involvement favoured the maintenance of a public service; speedy, comfortable inter-city travel, and continental and intermodal (in co-operation with road vehicles) catenades of goods transport, all in conjunction with new electronic and computerized signalling, have been developed, and the elements of a new age of the railway are beginning to appear. It is an age which will be dominated by electric traction as the first was by steam.

This remarkable history of an achievement which transformed the world and human life, and which is not yet played out, is chronicled by G. Freeman Allen, son of that distinguished student of railway affairs, and expert on "locomotive practice and performance", Cecil J. Allen, in this authoritative and well-produced book. Packed with facts, it never lapses into dullness, and is enlivened by many amusing and illuminating touches, such as the fatalistic advertisement of the Baltimore and Ohio line that a wagon loaded with bales of cotton would be interspersed between the engine and its coaches to protect travellers when the locomotive explodes. The text is copiously illustrated with photographs, charts and coloured pictures. These last are usually accurate and true in colour, though something seems to have gone wrong with a picture of a 1900 Midland Railway express train in which coaches and engine are depicted not in the characteristic Derby livery of the period, but in something suggestive of North British Ironze green.

This apart, this is a book to be warmly commended, both for its interesting reading and for reference. I know of no better treatment of its fascinating theme.

It has often been said, with some justice, that *Curial and Gueffa* describes a code of manners which is beginning to disintegrate. It would be equally correct to say, on the other hand, that the best parts of the book are convincing precisely because the author is writing about what he believes in, and to connect this with the deliberate revival of chivalry which took place in both Spain and France from the late fourteenth century onwards. Whatever the truth of this, *Curial and Gueffa*, with its lapses and inconsistencies, still deserves to be read as a serious work of fiction. Its peculiar mixture of the real and the imaginary is not quite like anything else in the European literature of the time, and even for an uninitiated reader it creates a sharply etched world which is often compelling because of its very strangeness. For the serious student of narrative, there is additional interest in so far as it suggests the ways in which late medieval romance is already beginning to open up in certain directions which will eventually make possible more sophisticated types of fiction. (By a curious coincidence, one of Julia Kristeva's last essays on semantics and narrative, "The Bounded Text", is based on an analysis of Antoine de Sale's *Le Petit Jehan de Saintré* (1456), a book which is sometimes cited as a possible model for the early chapters of *Curial and Gueffa*.)

This cannot have been an easy book to translate. It only because of the diversity of registers it employs and its meticulously detailed descriptions of heraldry and knighthood protocol. Dr Walcy's version is resourceful, accurate and eminently readable.

The Achaemenids in action

P. R. S. Moore

J. M. Cook

The Persian Empire
275pp. Dent. £12.95.
0 460 04448 6

Much of the history of the Achaemenid Persian Empire (c 550-330 BC) was memorably written long ago by the greatest of Greek historians. When their record has not survived, we remain largely ignorant; where it is deficient or obscure there are still very few independent sources to which we may turn. Their narratives were so skilful that what did not interest them has tended not to interest us and where they judged, by Greek standards, to be unimportant or uninteresting, the main accounts of Cook's intention to distinguish clearly between reliable fact and accumulated conjecture, is

those of Dandamaev and Hinz, have tended to concentrate on the earliest and greatest of the Achaemenid kings. Publication of archaeological research remains characteristically intermittent and specialist.

Following Rawlinson's dictum about writing the history of Oriental monarchies, whenever sources permit, Cook has focused his substantial historical sections on a series of biographies. Studies of the army and imperial organization are appropriately interleaved into the history of the Empire to the death of Xerxes; a watershed in the sources reached over halfway through the book. The greater part of the remaining portion embraces chapters devoted to such topics as the king and the court, art and architecture, religion and imperial administration. The main account of Cook's intention to distinguish clearly between reliable fact and accumulated conjecture, is

Invasion-prone

C. M. Woodhouse

DAVID HUNT (Editor)

Footprints in Cyprus: An illustrated history
300pp. Trigraph Limited, 21/25
Earl Street, London EC4A 3HY.
£17.90.
0 9503026 0 3

"Cyprus never has been Greek" was the famous slogan thirty years ago. But what else has it ever been? This handsome book (the first publication of a new house) provides a full answer: Phoenician, Assyrian, Persian, Egyptian, Roman, Arab, Frankish, Venetian, Turkish, British. Some of the invaders left significant marks on the island (footprints, in the phrase of the title) and some, permanently changed and enriched it. But at least since the fourteenth century, as the Greeks have been the only native element (and by far the largest) in the population, which can claim an unbroken continuity.

The slogan of the 1950s is replaced by the editor's succinct conclusion that "nothing happened in Cyprus which could not be paralleled elsewhere in Greece. There was nothing to modify the essential character of the Great Greek island." But that is not to say that the island's civilization did not develop in separate ways from the Greek mainland. Every chapter in

well effected throughout. If Olmstead's remains the fullest account of the Persian Empire, Cook's is certainly no less reliable. It is unfortunate that in such an arrangement the freshest and more original passages are in the later chapters and in a thoughtful epilogue. If modern study of the Achaemenid Empire is to break the traditional mould, it is away from king and court, trumpet and drum, that most is likely to be done. Being the region best known to classical writers and the richest in ancillary sources, Turkey, as recent essays by Hoffmann and Starr have shown, is the ideal place to start, and here Cook is particularly at home. In Turkey it is possible to ask, and in some measure to begin to answer, a fresh set of questions about the socio-economic character of the Persian Empire and degrees of cultural interaction. In Babylonia, relatively well documented, and to a lesser extent

in Egypt and Palestine, this is also increasingly possible; but progress in synthesis is inhibited by the special knowledge needed in each case to handle local sources. Cook acknowledges that this is a difficulty he has not wholly resolved; nor yet has anyone else. More has, however, been done in recent years than is apparent here to return a more truly Oriental perspective to Achaemenid studies. Belatedly, in his epilogue, Cook confronts this key issue with ideas that might profitably have been developed through his narrative. His evident knowledge of the rich literature of Persian travel, with its astute observations on timeless custom and remarkably enduring institutions, is now too rare an asset in an ancient historian to be exploited only in the last paragraph. Its potential, as is there made clear, for diversifying current approaches to the Achaemenid

Empire is considerable and deserves at least an essay from Professor Cook. Margaret Root's *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art* (1979) does not seem to have reached the time for account to be taken of its illuminating commentary on the Achaemenid's oriental baggage. Her analysis may at times be over-enthusiastic, but it offers the first systematic investigation of how the early, creative Achaemenid rulers conceived the Empire and how they may have wanted others to see it. We have long known what it was about the Persians that fascinated the Greeks and what was not so clear before Cook has shown us clearly. But what it was that fascinated the Persians themselves he rarely tells us, for they came from realms of thought and ideas that Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon could not know and which we are only just beginning to comprehend.

ALISTAIR FOX
Thomas More: History and Providence
271pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £17.50.
0 631 13094 2

THOMAS MORE
The Complete Works, Volume 6:
A Dialogue Concerning Heresies
Edited by Thomas M. C. Lawler,
Gerrard Marc'hadour and Richard C. Martin
300pp. Yale University Press. £56.
0 300 02211 5
The Complete Works, Volume 9:
The Apology
Edited by J. B. Trapp
356pp. Yale University Press. £29.75.
0 300 02067 8

It is a notable instance of the power of Thomas More's character that every age and interest annexes him as its own hero. Even Henry VIII's loyal chroniclers could not deny his heroic status. The Catholic apologists made him the first and greatest martyr of the beleaguered papacy. The rediscovery of Roger's life brought him back to the English Renaissance as a humanist scholar, Henry VIII's good genius, but above all as the hero of his family, a picture given for Victorian ideals by that once-famous novel *The House of the Medici*. In our own time Robert Bolt has given us the Man for all Seasons.

What sort of man More really was, what he believed, even what he said and wrote—all this has hitherto seemed less important than fitting the heroic elements to make our own image. But now Alistair Fox has righted the balance. He has taken the voluminous evidence of More's writings, from the early very difficult to the last works written in the Tower, and compared it with the portraits of More's life. The result is a portrait, more human than that of the more heroic for the frailties revealed, wholly sympathetic and wonderfully convincing. It is, in short, the best book on Thomas More's life and writings to appear since E. K. Chambers's, nearly fifty years ago.

Fox's argument, in brief, is that More's complex and private character was, from the outset, formed by two contrasting stresses, the urge to withdraw from a world made imperfect by man and the urge to participate in that world. God's design for the world might be better fulfilled. Signs of this can be seen in the early works, notably the *Life of Pico della Mirandola* and the

translations of Lucian. It stands fully revealed in *Utopia*, not only in the dialogue on whether to take service in the state, but also in the text; the Utopians are "successful Carthusian monks, the governing of whom would allow him to bring the cloister into the court, where he already knew he might be headed". More's own dualism is reflected in the dialogue of Hythlodæus and Morus.

By choosing to opt for the political role of Morus, More must have believed that he was affirming the same faith as the Utopians. His trust in providence was revealed in his readiness to commit himself to action, not in any confidence that his course was definitively the best. On the contrary, he knew from the outset that his political career was fraught with moral dangers, but he knew equally that Hythlodæus' way was even more perilous because it ended in a negation of human responsibility, both temporal and spiritual.

Belief in providence, the working out of the pattern revealed in the past, was deep in More's being. It emerges in the history passages. It explains the *History of Richard III*, where Cardinal Morton is presented as the type of acting in the world "so as to make a little bad as possible what cannot be made entirely good". The treatise *The Four Last Things* is a spiritual reaction to firsthand experience of life at court. In particular the show-trial of the Duke of Buckingham.

It was at this point that More finally embarked on the course that led irrevocably to Tower Hill. Commanded to answer Luther's attack on Henry VIII and immersed in legal and court business, he became the reluctant apologist of the state in which he was also Lord Chancellor. His own attitude was indifferent.

He had come to accept that truth was as liable to be grasped through the experience of paradox and ambiguity as it was through absolute, rational definition. To this end he had evolved a mode of literary depiction capable of representing how contradictions may merge themselves in a higher truth that comprehends them. His own inclination towards poetry and history, rather than pure philosophy or history, sprang from his belief that truth, especially religious truth, was never self-evident nor complete in every respect, because its revelation was an historical process.

Nicolas Barker
Believing this, More's image of controversialists as "very much like to men fighting naked among piles of stones: each has plenty of weapons, neither has any defence" is all too apt.

This aspect of More's writing is vast and forbidding but thoroughly familiar to Fox. He has carefully placed together the strands of More's doctrinal approach: he shrewdly points out that More's special antipathy for Luther was based on similarity of temperament, and that there is an implicit analogy between the Law and the Church ("both were institutional instruments through which the virtues of divine and natural law could be developed in history"). The collapse of his analogy in real life was the seed of More's destruction.

Fox's articulation of More's controversial writing with his political career is equally convincing. Following the brilliant reconstruction, in John Guy's *The Public Career of Sir Thomas More* (1980) (which does for the private More what Fox has done for the public More), of his part in opposing the extremist courses urged on Henry VIII by the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk and, with final success, by Cromwell, Fox shows how More fought a battle on two fronts, overtly opposing the "poisoned books" of the reformers, but also tacitly countering the machinations of his political opponents. Like Morton, More knew and told Tyndale that "if we be not only simple as doves, but also prudent and wise as serpents, his [God's] inward uncion will work with our diligence". At the back of it all More knew that Christendom was at stake. It was better to shore up imperfect unity than accelerate disastrous fragmentation.

Fox is inclined to read too much personal involvement in the bitterness of the later controversy. He suggests that More saw his innermost beliefs at risk. There is a rather finely balanced point at which the lawyer's argument of every issue and refusal to concede anything were subsumed in personal horror at the pervasiveness of heresy and the collapse of his policy. What is certain is that his resignation and imprisonment brought a great sense of relief. *A Dialogue of Comfort* brings back the old More, easy, humorous and tolerant, and the *De Tristitia* finds him finally making his peace with God, the all-in-all of his earthly life.

Inevitably, treatises against heresy, heretics and heretical books occupy the

major part of the substantial folio of More's works published in 1557. He saw, earlier than most, the dangers of Lutheranism added to latent Lollardy, now surcharged with an increasingly anticlerical court bias. The formal invitation extended by Cuthbert Tunstall in 1528 to write counterblasts to the increasing number of heretical books was only part of a campaign in which canon and common law were united to get rid of heretics, by abjuration preferably, but if not, by driving them abroad or, ultimately, by the stake. It was not a pleasant business, but one that More took with the seriousness it demanded. A *Dialogue Concerning Heresies* was the first of More's tracts, a Platonic dialogue written in a more leisurely, persuasive vein than his later pieces, when increasing danger added gall to his ink. The speakers are More himself and "the Messenger" sent by an old friend to More because he has doubts—tradition suggests that these may reflect William Roper's brief infection with Lutheranism. It is, for all its length, a lively and readable piece, written with all the wit and subtlety and humour of which More was master. The issues—dependence on scripture alone, justification by faith, the current writings and lives of Luther and others—are dealt with discursively but persuasively; the Messenger says farewell, his doubts assuaged. The text, set out with the care common to all the Yale editions of *The Complete Works*, is buttressed with ample exegesis by Thomas M. C. Lawler and Gerrard Marc'hadour, setting the historical scene and emphasizing the importance of scripture in the debate. Richard C. Martin reflects usefully on More's sources.

Both these Yale texts were finished too soon to take account of Guy's work. J. B. Trapp's account of the *History of Richard III* is a masterpiece of scholarship and insight. From this, all the more pity since his editorial preface is one of the most substantial and authoritative contributions to More scholarship that the Yale edition has elicited, notably fair in its assessment of all the controversial issues. By 1533 More is embittered by the strife he pursues his adversary to the last letter of their errors with a dogged determination that seems to ask when all this will end. In the interval, he and Tyndale have identified each other as chief antagonists, but Tyndale has many allies, while More is increasingly isolated. In the *Apology* he defends himself carefully against all malicious

accusations; he also deals with St German's *Treatise Concerning the Division between the Spirituality and the Laity*, a threat truly serious—moderate in tone, written by a lawyer and perhaps an old friend, and an onslaught on the Church, notably the authority of the ecclesiastical courts.

More found this hard to take, and indeed to answer, since St German's case was an ingenious confutation of excerpts from irreproachable authorities such as Gerson, with a final "pacific" plea that every man should endeavour to attain by grace to "zeal of souls". The issue of conscience emerges again as More urges in reply "a good Christian mind to the maintenance of Christ's catholic faith, and that they therein stand by the old... and for the discerning thereof from all news, to stand to the common well-known belief of the common known catholic church of all Christian people". If, then, St German's examples were difficult to combat, his basic questioning of ecclesiastical authority undermined the concept of Christendom as the yardstick (so to speak) of conscience.

In a broader sense, conscience, the right or duty of the individual to measure his own conduct, was the basic issue that confronted all the participants in the conflict. King and Church, Chancellor and reformists, alike, it was clear, the power politics around the "great matter", as well as More's attempt to suppress the reformers. But while More looked to the ideal of a united Christendom for salvation, Erasmus had been wiser in the ways of the world when he wrote to More in 1526, "In England this epidemic is more easily contained, because the whole matter depends on the will of one man." What neither More nor Erasmus could predict was the outbreak of the Reformation.

These were the forces that ultimately brought More down. But he, wiser than they knew that this failure was to be his ultimate success. Implicit in his writing, especially in his admirable commentary, was Fox's understanding that this was a cause to die for. Always wary, he fought to the last, exploring every legal avenue of defence before he allowed the inevitable to destroy him. He knew, before he died, that his destruction would give him and (vastly more important) what he believed in an inextinguishable life and fame.

Empire style

Margaret Lyttelton

FRANK SEAR

Roman Architecture
288pp. Batsford, £25 (paperback,
£9.95).
0 7134 4097 X

Another history of Roman architecture might seem superfluous after the detailed and authoritative *Encyclopaedia of Roman Architecture* by A. Boethius and J. Ward-Perkins (Penguin, 1970), but the buildings of ancient Rome exercise a powerful fascination. Their gigantic ruins still dominate the townscape of modern Rome, while the imposing remains of abandoned Roman cities stretch from Morocco to the Syrian desert. The reputation of Classical architecture and the level of interest in the buildings of ancient Rome have fluctuated widely since the Renaissance. Classical architecture was on inspiration to the eighteenth century, and at times, anathema to the nineteenth. "Does any living soul in London like triglyphs?" demanded Ruskin. In a number of recent buildings the elements of Classical architecture have come once more into prominence: in Charles Moore's Piazza d'Italia in New Orleans, a stylish and scintillating Corinthian capital forms the centre of a fountain, while Corinthian and Ionic

columns articulate the façades.

Frank Sear's *Roman Architecture* is intimate and carefully presented. It is aimed primarily at students. Hence it has the virtues of being clear, concise and readable rather than of being comprehensive and encyclopaedic, like the books of Cremo and Ward-Perkins, or brilliantly innovative, like that of W. MacDonald. It is on exactly the right scale to cover in less than 300 pages the vast subject of Roman architecture, with its diverse aspects of design, construction and decoration; and to include the numerous regional variations in buildings spread out over a vast empire. Dr Sear has rightly coped with his space and his attention on the buildings of Italy, particularly those of Rome, Ostia and Pompeii. There are two particularly instructive chapters, one on Roman building types, both public and private, and the second on the elements of building methods. In the latter, the revolution in architectural style made possible through developing to the full the potentialities of construction in concrete is clearly explained; this dramatic change from the sculpted, linear forms of the Greek and Hellenistic past to the soaring domes and canopied volumes of the later Roman and Byzantine periods lies at the heart of the achievement of Roman architecture.

Sear's book is well illustrated with a large number of photographs, plans

and drawings, many of them new. Throughout the book architectural developments are related to historical events and to changes in society. Tracing architectural development in Italy, Sear begins with the buildings of the early Republic and goes down to the great buildings of the emperor Hadrian's reign. The final chapter describes the architecture of the late Empire. The choice of buildings discussed is necessarily highly selective, and most buildings are succinctly described, but in the case of some exceptional works, like Hadrian's Villa and the Pantheon, Sear rightly disregards the limitations of space, and dissects these buildings in illuminating detail.

The later sections of the book on the architecture of the Roman provinces are mostly too brief to be entirely satisfactory; it is impossible to do justice to the rich architecture of Asia Minor in four pages, as Sear attempts. Roman France is also cursorily treated, so it is perhaps misleading that the striking photographs on the jacket (both taken by Sear) are of the Pont du Gard and the amphitheatre at Nîmes—this might suggest a greater concentration on the architecture of the provinces than is the case. However, the strength and interest of this book lies in its treatment of the architecture of the heart of the empire, which is after all the heart of the subject.

This supplementary monograph is more than archaeological geology: in its use of pollen analysis and the very pseudo-geological phytoliths the book is partly concerned with the biological sciences; and this part commands respect. It cannot answer questions, however, from the samples provided it can indicate that wheat has been cultivated from early Troy I, but it cannot tell us whether olives, vines and valocis oaks were grown in prehistoric times. What it can do is to tell the archaeologist what questions to ask the site if he should ever excavate it again.

Schliemann excavated Troy conscientiously. He brought in specialists and scientists and he left "islands" so that future archaeologists could test his stratification. Blegen used the latter when he meticulously excavated what remained of Troy in 1932-38. Near the end of the 1937 season he had 360 soil (now "sedimentary matrix") samples taken from stratified pits and stored in Cincinatti in the hope that some day they might be investigated. Unlike most such boards they were not thrown away, and in 1975 a team of specialists in half a dozen disciplines got to work on them. In support of this, coring was carried out in the vicinity of Troy in 1977.

The most startling "palaeo-environmental" chapters come from what used to be called the earth-scientists. Here interpretation is attempted. Some slight support does seem to be provided for Blegen's claim

Questioning the earth

J. M. Cook

GEORGE RAFF JR and JOHN A. GIFFORD (Editors)

Troy: The Archaeological Geology, Supplementary Monograph 4
209pp. Guildford: Princeton
University Press. £40.90.
0 691 03559 8

The new geomorphological constructions based on the drilling and prehistoric Troy as sticking its thumb into a bay and the north-south of the plain as still a deep depression of 10 Strabo's time (±2000 BC). The result is a picture of a landscape that is demonstrably wrong. Because Herodotus and Strabo, on the one hand, and the archaeological evidence, on the other, provided here the error would be mainly due to the adoption of an archaeological "eustatic curve" (the level) which may have been an average misplacement of the coastline by two to three metres to the reconstruction. The controversies then rise about the sea and the Bosphorus, and the resuscitated, if we believe, the Bosphorus, on the Aegean coast, about the "eustatic curve" (the level) which may have been an average misplacement of the coastline by two to three metres to the reconstruction. 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